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CHESS AND LIFE:

IT'S COLD IN HIGH PLACES

WIJK AAN ZEE TOURNAMENT

CARLSEN TAKES FIRST STEPS TOWARDS HIS 2900 GOAL

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WORLD CHAMPION WINS 8TH WIJK AAN ZEE TOURNAMENT

CARLSEN

TAKES FIRST STEPS TOWARDS HIS 2900 GOAL

THE LUCKY, THE POSITIVE, THE NEGATIVE AND THE WINNER

By GM Alex Colovic / alexcolovic.com
Photo: Tata Steel Official:
Jurriaan Hoefsmit, Lennart Ootes

The tournament in Wijk aan Zee continued with the tradition, even in difficult pandemic times. Some sacrifices had to be made, however, such as eliminating the amateur section and the audience, but the two main events continued as planned.

The dates were the usual ones from mid to the end of January (15-30).

The tournament was won by World Champion Magnus Carlsen who thus made his first steps towards his new goal - reaching the 2900 ELO mark. In a class of his own - a world apart from the others - Carlsen convincingly took first place in Wijk for the record 8th time, scoring 9.5/13, without a single defeat.

THE LUCKY GUY

Playing on home turf is always inspiring for the country's best player. Last year was a triumph of the local players with Jorden van Foreest and Anish Giri sharing first with the younger one winning on tie-break. While it was difficult to expect a repeat of that triumph, a win by Giri was something quite reasonable to bet on. However, this year his chances took a serious blow when he was beaten by the World Champion as early as round two.

Magnus **Carlsen** – Anish **Giri**

84th Tata Steel Masters Wijk aan Zee NED (2.1)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.g3 The Catalan was Carlsen's main weapon with White in the match with Nepomniachtchi. He didn't get to use it except in the first white game, which means that all the preparation is now available for his tournament games.

4...♗e7 5.♗g2 0-0 6.0-0 dxc4 7.♘a3!? Here is the first surprise. In the second game of the match in Dubai Carlsen played the main move 7.♕c2. The knight move was considered harmless for a very long time, but here we see Carlsen's conception for his match preparation - he explored many sidelines in the Catalan and found new ideas based on long-term compensation for the pawn.

7...♗xa3 8.bxa3 ♗d7 Black transfers the bishop to c6 in order to neutralise the Catalan bishop on g2.

9.a4!? Here comes the second surprise. This is a rare move; previously White had tried 9.♘e5 (to stop ...♗c6) or 9.♕c2.

9...♗c6 10.♗a3 Thanks to his last move White activates the unopposed dark-squared bishop.

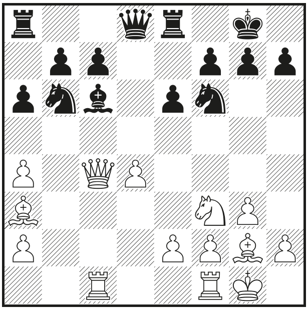
10...♖e8 11.♕c2 ♘bd7 Black finishes development and intends ...♘b6xa4 in case White captures on c4 with the queen.

12.♖ac1 The capture on c4 is met by ...♘b6xa4, so White makes a useful move before taking that pawn. Black's problem is that having finished development he is somewhat short of useful moves himself.

12.a5?! this prevents ...♘b6 but the cure is worse than the disease as after 12...b5 13.axb6 axb6 the bishop on a3 is hanging and after ...b5 next White won't have any compensation for the pawn.

12...a6 Threatening ...b5 and forcing White to take on c4.

13.♕xc4 ♘b6

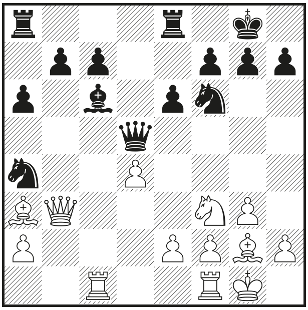


14.♕c3! A subtle move. White entices Black to gain a tempo by capturing on a4 with the knight, but then the knight will be on the rim, which will indeed turn out to be dim in this game!

14...♘xa4 Giri thinks he can get away with the dim knight. From a theoretical perspective he is right, as Black's position remains fine, but practically he enters a position with complicated problems to solve.

Black would have liked to take on a4 with the bishop, but after 14...♗xa4 15.♘e5! *(but not 15.♕xc7?! ♕xc7 16.♖xc7 ♘fd5 with excellent activity of the black pieces as 17.♖xb7? is impossible in view of 17...♗c6 trapping the rook.)* 15...c6 16.e4 with strong compensation for the pawn in view of the pawn centre and the pair of bishops, in addition to Black's vulnerability on the queenside.

15.♕b3 ♕d5?!

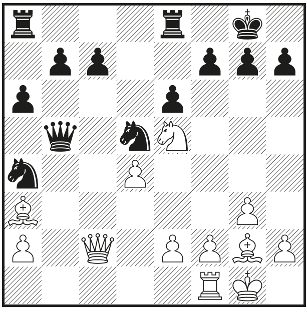


A risky move, even further increasing the complexity of Black's problems.

15...♘b6 also allowed the exchange sacrifice, but it is somewhat easier to calculate. After 16.♖xc6! bxc6 17.♘e5 ♕xd4 18.♘xc6 ♕c4 this is clearer and more straightforward *(or 18...♕d2 19.♗f3!? with an unclear position.)* 19.♘e7+ ♖xe7 20.♕xc4 ♘xc4 21.♗xe7 ♖b8 the endgame is relatively safe for Black. White has compensation for the pawn but not more.

16.♖xc6! ♕xc6 17.♘e5 ♕b5 18.♕c2 Black’s queen and knight on a4 are awkwardly short of squares on the queenside and this constitutes Black’s main problem. White threatens ♖b1 to harass the queen and in combination with the threats against the pawns on c7 and b7 Black has serious problems to solve.

18...♘d5?



Giri cracks, possibly missing the powerful (and quite unexpected) exchange of the Catalan bishop for the knight.

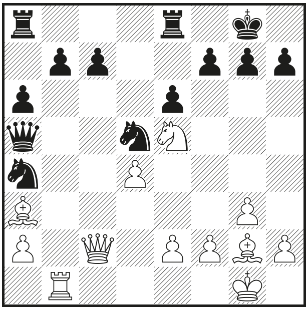
18...♘b6! was one way for Black to stay in the game. After 19.♗xb7 ♘c4! some calculation is required to see that after 20.♗xa8 ♘xa3 21.♕c6 ♕xe2 22.♕xc7 ♖f8 an unclear position arises with chances for both sides.;

18...♖eb8!? was another way. It appears that it loses to 19.♖b1 ♕e8 20.♗xb7 but Black has the stunning 20...♘c3!! 21.♕xc3 ♖a7 and now with the queen lured to c3 the rook on b1 lacks protection, so the bishop on 7 cannot move. 22.♕f3 c6! the same motif as in the ninth game in Dubai, trapping the bishop! 23.♘xc6 ♖axb7 24.♖c1! *(the threats are ♘b8 and ♘e7)* 24...♖c8 25.♘e7+ ♖xe7 26.♖xc8 ♕xc8 27.♗xe7 ♕c1+ 28.♔g2 ♘d5 when White’s extra pawn is very difficult to convert. It has to be said that his whole variation is impossible to see and calculate in a game.

19.♖b1 Activating the rook and sidelining the queen.

“Do you feel lucky?”: Anish Giri

19...♕a5



20.♗xd5! The engine suggests inserting 20.♗e4 first, but this is too subtle.

20...exd5? The natural recapture that loses the game.

20...♕xd5?! 21.♕xa4 should be lost for Black, the two pieces are stronger than the rook as Black’s rooks don’t have open files; 20...♘c3! - the same knight jump as in the line after 18...♖eb8. The knight on the rim is dim, but it can dip right back in, especially if it can swim! 21.♗b4 ♘xe2+ 22.♕xe2 ♕xd5 is a superior version compared to the immediate 20...♕d5 as here White is missing the e-pawn, making his d4-pawn an isolated one. White is still much better after 23.♖c1 c6 24.♗c5 but Black can still resist.

21.♖xb7 Now Black's position falls apart as he cannot protect his kingside (the f7-square) and keep together his pieces on the queenside.

21...c5 22.♕f5 Switching the attack to the kingside. Notice how Black's pieces on the a-file are completely offside.

22...♖f8 23.♘xf7 ♕d8 24.dxc5 Simple moves: the threat is c6.

24...♕f6 25.♕xf6 gxf6 26.♘h6+ ♔h8 27.c6 Black has managed to exchange queens, but now the passed c-pawn decides.

27...♖fc8 28.c7 All that is necessary now is to get the knight to d6.

28...♘c3 Way too late.

29.♗b2 d4 30.♘f7+ ♔g7 31.♘d6 White regains the exchange and remains two pawns up.

31...♔g6 32.♔f1 ♘b5 33.♘xc8 ♖xc8 34.a4 ♘xc7 35.♗xd4 ♘e6 36.♗e3

1-0

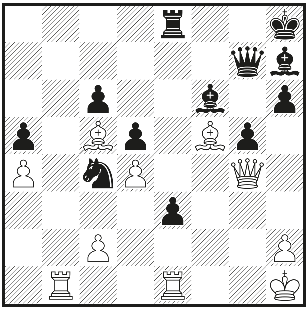
It seemed that the Dutchman lost his drive after this blow. It is well-known that he motivates himself especially for these games and takes them quite seriously. His next games were rather lame: a quick and tame draw against Mamedyarov (21 moves), a theoretical draw against Karjakin (14 moves) and a draw against friend and former second Vidit. Nothing seemed to imply that Giri would even come close to something similar to what he achieved last year.

Until Lady Luck intervened.

It is often said that there is no luck in chess, and I also subscribe to that opinion. Sometimes, however, there is no other way to describe what happens on the chess board and how those unexpected and favourable events impact the next games.

Fabiano **Caruana** - Anish **Giri**

84th Tata Steel Masters Wijk aan Zee NED (6.5)



The preceding fight was tense and Caruana was winning, but now things are unclear. Having a few minutes to execute his 40th move, he confidently played the following shocker:

40.♖b6?? Simply putting the rook on a square where it can be taken. An incredible blunder that you don't get to see on this level.

40.♕h5 ♖g8 41.♖f1 kept the position very sharp and unclear.

40...♘xb6 41.♗xb6 ♗xf5 42.♕xf5 ♗xd4 Black was easily winning with three pawns up and he soon wrapped up the game.

0-1

What a present.

However, after receiving this lavish gift Giri was treated with an even bigger one! His next round opponent, Daniil Dubov, tested negative for Covid, but somebody from his immediate entourage tested positive, so the organisers asked him to play with a mask. He refused (more on this below) and instead of finding a reasonable solution to play the game on the free day (which was the next day) Giri was awarded a win by default! And suddenly, without any effort of his own, Giri has emerged from a minus to a plus score!

Sensing that there is a favourable wind blowing in his sails, and as it usually happens when the struggling player is raised from the mud, Giri also started to play well and convincingly won his next two games, making it four wins in a row and enabling him to reach second place in the standings. An amazing run!

The twists and turns of Giri's tournament didn't stop here. After the draw with Duda his luck ran out when he met last year's winner - van Foreest. The player who had beaten him in the tie-break this time crushed him in a direct attack that arose from the rarely played nowadays Saemisch Variation in the Nimzo-Indian.

Jorden **Van Foreest** – Anish **Giri**

84th Tata Steel Masters Wijk aan Zee NED (11.2)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.a3 The Saemisch Variation is a rare guest nowadays. While it was Botvinnik's preference in the matches with Tal, today it is considered that practically any line gives Black good play. However, in Wijk White scored 2/2 with the Saemisch, so perhaps a rebirth is on the cards?

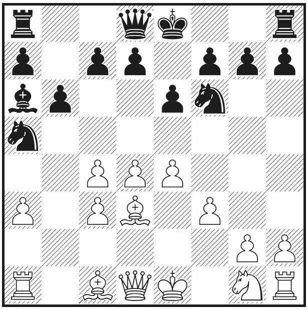
Jorden Van Foreest - Anish Giri

Jorden van Foreest
TATA STEEL CHESS
Anish Giri
TATA STEEL

4...♗xc3+ 5.bxc3 b6 In the last round Esipenko chose 5...c5 against Praggnanandhaa, but in spite of a good opening still lost the game.

6.f3 White's plan in the Saemisch is simple - he wants to build a strong pawn centre and use it to launch an attack.

6...♘c6 7.e4 ♘a5 8.♗d3 ♗a6



Black's play is very direct, immediately targeting the weak pawn on c4. He hopes that White's pawn centre will be useless as his pieces are out of its way and in the meantime he wants to further increase the pressure on the c4-pawn by getting the queen to c6 (via c8 and b7) or a4 (via d7).

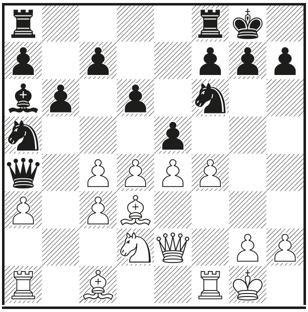
9.♕e2 White defends the pawn on c4.

9...d6 10.f4 ♕d7 Black follows his plan. White in the meantime needs to keep his queenside together and try to build up an attack in the centre and on the kingside.

11.♘f3 ♕a4 12.♘d2 e5 Black stops e5, though it was possible to allow it. For Black, a more important decision is what to do with his king. Generally speaking, a safe haven for Black's king is the queenside, but he can still postpone that decision.

12...♘g8!? was an interesting alternative, getting away from the e5 attack. This also implies that Black will castle queenside. A possible line of play is 13.♕g4 g6 14.f5 exf5 15.exf5 ♕d7 with ...0-0-0 next with unclear play.

13.0-0 0-0?

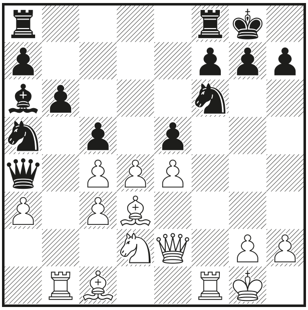


Black voluntarily draws fire upon himself by provoking an exchange sacrifice on f6. Possibly this was motivated by a certain underestimation of his opponent and an inflated desire to win at all cost.

13...0-0-0 was much safer and better. After 14.♖b1 exf4 *(in case of 14...♖he8 15.♖b4 ♕d7 16.fxe5 dxe5 17.c5! gives White an initiative on the queenside.)* 15.♖xf4 c5 stopping c5 and fixing the target on c4 the position is unclear, but what's most important for Black is that his king is safe.

14.fxe5 dxe5 15.♖b1 The immediate 15.♖xf6! was possible. But White had to foresee 15...gxf6 16.♕f2! ♕d1+ 17.♘f1!! ♕xd3 18.♕h4!! and it turns out White's attack is irresistible. He now threatens ♗h6 and ♕xf6. A very pretty sample line is 18...h5!? 19.♗h6 ♔h7 20.♘g3!! ♖g8 *(taking the bishop leads to mate after 20...♔xh6 21.♕xh5+ ♔g7 22.♘f5+ ♔g8 23.♕g4+ ♔h7 24.♕g7#)* 21.♕xh5 ♖xg3 22.hxg3 ♕xe4 23.♕xf7+! ♔xh6 24.♖f1! and White will win Black's queen when obtain a winning advantage.

15...c5?



Giving White a second chance to sacrifice on f6. It was more sensible to move the knight to d7, maintaining a good position.

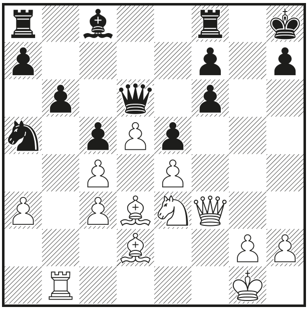
16.♖xf6! gxf6 17.♕f3 White's compensation is long-term as Black's pieces are stranded on the a-file (remember the game Carlsen-Giri from round two!) and White can build up his attack slowly as there are a lot of weak squares around Black's king.

17...♕c6 18.d5 ♕d6 19.♘f1 The knight aims for the f5-square.

19...♔h8 Liberating the g8-square for the rook.

19...♗xc4? loses to 20.♘e3! ♗xd3 21.♘f5 - winning the queen or mating.

20.♘e3 ♗c8 21.♗d2



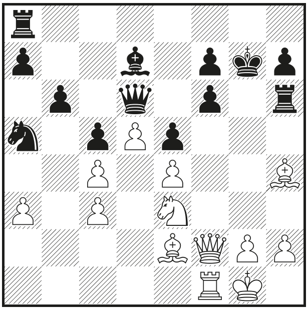
White finishes development. Now the rook can join the attack from the f-file and the bishop can also be activated via e1 and h4.

21...♖g8? Like in the game with Carlsen Giri is slow to bring back the knight on the rim.

21...♕e7! was better, with the idea ...♘b7-d6. After 22.♖f1 ♘b7 23.d6! ♕e6! *(23...♘xd6? 24.♘d5 with ♘xf6 next wins for White.; 23...♕xd6? 24.♘d5 ♖g8 25.♗e1 with ♗h4 White has a decisive attack.)* 24.♘d5 *(24.♕h5!? ♖g8 25.♕h4 ♖g6 26.♖f5* is another way for White to continue the attack.*)* 24...♖g8 25.♘c7 ♕xd6 26.♘xa8 ♗g4 27.♕e3 ♖xa8 28.♗e1 is still very good for White but Black can play.

22.♗e1 ♖g6 23.♗h4 ♖h6 24.♕f2 ♗d7 25.♖f1 ♔g7 Perhaps Black thought that he can hold here, but after White's next move Black's defences collapse.

26.♗e2!



With the idea of ♗g4, to exchange the light-squared bishops and obtain the f5-square for the knight.

26...♖g6 27.h3 Insisting on ♗g4, though 27.♗h5 was also possible.

27...♗xh3 Black gives back the exchange, but the problem is that he also loses the pawn on f6.

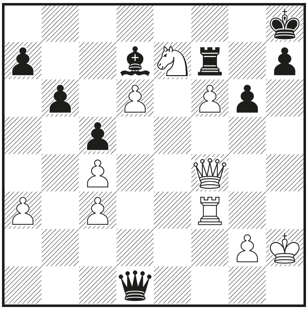
28.♗h5 ♗d7 29.♗xg6 fxg6 30.♗xf6+ ♔g8 31.♕h4 The attack is irresistible; the opposite-coloured bishops only help White as Black doesn't have a piece to oppose White's play on the dark squares.

31...♖f8 32.♖f3 ♖f7 33.♕g5 Now the pawn on e5 falls.

33...♕f8 34.♕xe5 ♘b7 Too late.

35.♕f4 ♘d6 36.e5 The pawns march forward.

36...♘e8 37.d6 ♘xf6 38.exf6 ♕e8 39.♘d5 ♕e1+ 40.♔h2 ♕d1 41.♘e7+ ♔h8



42.♖h3! A pretty finish.

42.♖h3! ♗xh3 43.d7! is the idea, threatening ♕b8, mating. 43...♖f8 44.♘xg6+! ♔g8 taking on g6 allows a mate in two after ♕h6-g7. 45.♘xf8 ♔xf8 46.♕h6+ ♔f7 47.♕g7+ ♔e6 48.♕e7+ ♔f5 49.f7 and one of the pawns will promote.

1-0

......

This second loss definitely punctured Giri's drive and he finished the event with two uneventful draws.

A very curious tournament fate of the Dutchman, seeing a rise and fall in the span of only seven days!

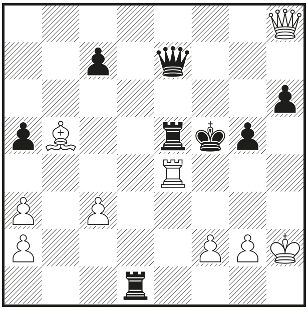
THE POSITIVE GUY

After declining his invitation last year Daniil Dubov promised himself that he would definitely play in Wijk in 2022. ‘Life is good,’ he said following his crazy Round One draw with Mamedyarov. It seemed that we would get the usual Dubov entertainment and in some ways he didn’t disappoint.

When it comes to the events on the chess board his tournament took a turn for the worse in round three, when his inspired attack was met by a no less inspired defence. Both players played well and draw would have been a fair result, but in time trouble Dubov overpressed.

Daniil **Dubov** – **Vidit** Santosh Gujrathi

84th Tata Steel Masters Wijk aan Zee NED (3.2)



The culmination of the fierce battle. Attack and defence were both on a very high level and the game should have ended in a draw, but in time trouble Dubov overstepped the limit.

32.f3? After this White has nothing and Black remains with extra material.

32.♕c8+! leads to a perpetual check after 32...♔f6 *(Perhaps Dubov missed the fact that taking the rook leads to a pretty epaulette mate: 32...♔xe4 33.♕g4+ ♔d5 34.♕c4+ ♔d6 35.♕c6#)* 33.♕h8+ ♔f5 34.♕c8+.

The Positive Guy: Daniil Dubov

32...♖xe4 33.fxe4+ ♔xe4 34.♕a8+ ♔e3 White simply doesn’t have pieces to pose any danger to the wandering king.

35.♗c6 ♕e5+ 36.g3 g4 37.♕a7+ ♔d2

0-1

The result of this game sent the players in opposite directions. The inspired Vidit continued to play well and led the tournament for some time, while Dubov couldn’t do much in his next three games. And then Covid struck.

DUBOV AND COVID

Before the event, Dubov confirmed with the organisers that he would not be forced to play with a face mask. He is against that in principle, not wanting to spend hours breathing in a mask while playing a difficult game.

When a person from his immediate surrounding tested positive, in spite of his own negative test, Dubov was asked to play with a mask against Giri. Defending his principles he declined and suffered a loss by default. It was never publicised why this game wasn’t played on the next day, which was a free day, but a second loss meant a bad event for Dubov already.

His next two games were certainly of a lower level than Dubov is capable of, though he managed two draws from them. There would have been a third one if it had not been for a hasty decision on move 76 in the game against tail-ender Grandelius and as if this game was a sign of the things to come…:

Dubov then tested positive for Covid.

This was the end of the event for him. Having played more than half of his games, this meant that he lost the remaining games by default. The final twist of the Covid saga was that a few days later Dubov tested negative, but was still prevented from playing his games!

Dubov's positive attitude in the start corresponded well with his negative tests, but once he became positive the whole event turned out to be quite a negative experience for him.

THE NEGATIVE GUY

After winning the match in Dubai Carlsen announced that his next goal was to reach 2900 on the rating list. Whether he achieves that goal or not will be interesting to see, but no less interesting was the sabotaging attitude of one of his rivals.

In the words of the World Champion's second Peter Heine Nielsen, Karjakin came closest to beating Carlsen in a match. Hence, Nielsen continues, his strategy has certain merit. But what is his strategy?

In simplified terms - playing for a draw, often with both colours. By positioning himself as an underdog Karjakin is happy to draw and hopes to get his chance in case Carlsen overpushes, like in the eighth game of the match in New York in 2016 and their penultimate classical game in Stavanger in September last year.

This negative strategy, aimed at undermining and playing from defence, harmonises well with Karjakin's natural abilities, but sometimes he takes it to extremes.

Facing Carlsen in round ten, after managing to reach a plus score on the previous day, Karjakin chose the most cynical way possible. The game lasted less than 15 minutes.

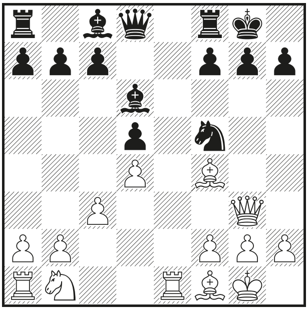
Sergey **Karjakin** – Magnus **Carlsen**

84th Tata Steel Masters Wijk aan Zee NED (10.1)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.♖e1 ♘d6 6.♘xe5 ♗e7 7.♗f1 ♘f5 8.c3
If White wants to play for more he usually keeps the knights on by means of 8.♘f3.

8...♘xe5 9.♖xe5 d6 10.♖e1 0-0 11.d4 d5
Black has no problems in this position.

12.♗f4 ♗d6 13.♕f3 ♘h4 14.♕g3 ♘f5 15.♕f3 ♘h4 16.♕g3 ♘f5



½-½

In an obvious attempt to hide his guilty conscience Karjakin immediately posted on Twitter the following tweet: "#drawmagnus #saynoto2900." Hiding behind the intended humour didn't work as there can be no excuse for playing cynically for a draw with White if the player has an iota of self-respect.

FACING CARLSEN IN ROUND TEN
KARJAKIN CHOSE THE MOST CYNIC WAY POSSIBLE TO DRAW.
THERE CAN BE NO EXCUSE FOR PLAYING CYNICALLY FOR A
DRAW WITH WHITE IF THE PLAYER HAS AN IOTA OF SELF-RESPECT

The picture says it all

It didn't take long for Karjakin to be punished for his cynicism. After his friendly draw with Mamedyarov (another fine pre-arranged game that was recited move-by-move by commentator Jan Gustafsson long before it had finished) he lost without a fight against Shankland after forgetting his preparation in a sharp line of the Nimzo-Indian. He sweetened the pill by winning in the last round against Vidit, but these draws inflict serious damage on Karjakin's reputation.

THE WINNER

It seemed as if there was never any doubt who would win the tournament. Helped by his excellent preparation for Dubai, the World Champion scored 100% in the Catalan, beating his nearest rivals Giri, Rapport and Mamedyarov. He missed several promising opportunities in the games he drew (according to Carlsen he had nine winning positions!), while the five games he won were clear and convincing. In round nine Carlsen beat Mamedyarov, who trailed by only half a point.

Magnus **Carlsen** – Shakhriyar **Mamedyarov**

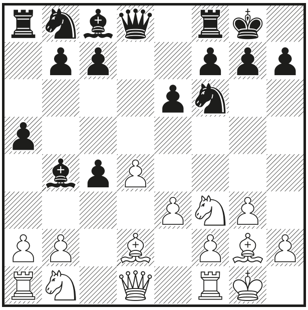
84th Tata Steel Masters Wijk aan Zee NED (9.1)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.g3 After his predecessors Kramnik and Anand (who successfully employed the Catalan in his match with Topalov) the current World Champion proves no less successful with it.

4...dxc4 Mamedyarov opts for the other main line. Giri played 4...♗e7 in round two.

5.♗g2 ♗b4+ One of the many options for Black.

6.♗d2 a5 7.0-0 0-0 8.e3!?



Here comes yet another early rarity by Carlsen. Instead of the more usual 8.♗g5 or 8.♕c2 he defends the d4-pawn in advance and now intends to concentrate his forces on the recapture of the c4-pawn.

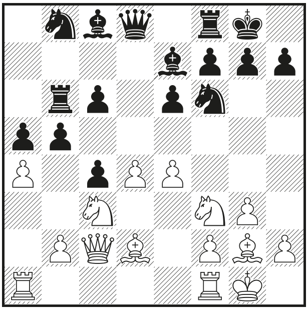
8...♖a6 Black removes the rook from the long diagonal.

8...♘c6 was Gelfand's choice in a blitz game, but it doesn't seem to be the best. After 9.♕e2 e5 10.♘xe5 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♘g4 played in Matlakov,M (2685)-Gelfand,B (2676) Chess.com 2020, White could have obtained an advantage after 12.f4!, safely defending the strong pawn on e5.

9.♕c2 b5 10.a4 c6 11.♘c3 ♖b6 Defending the pawn on b5.

12.e4 White has the typical Catalan compensation in view of the strong pawn centre and Black's lag in development.

12...♗e7?



White's threat was e5 and ♘g5 and Black defends by retreating the bishop so that after e5 ♘d5 the g5-square is under control. However, this defence has a tactical problem as it leaves the e1-a5 diagonal sensitive, the pawn on a5 in particular.

12...h6! was better. After 13.♗e3 ♘bd7 14.♖fd1 the position is unclear where both sides have their trumps.

13.e5! ♘d5 14.axb5 White opens the a-file.

14.♘xd5 was an alternative: 14...cxd5 15.♗xa5 b4 16.♗xb6 ♕xb6 17.a5 ♕a7 18.b3! also gave White an advantage, but here the position is more closed than in the game, making it more difficult for the white rooks to enter the game.

14...cxb5 Carlsen said he expected this sacrifice from Mamedyarov because it was in his style. Objectively it isn't very good, but practically it allows Black certain chances if White fails to neutralise Black's queenside pawns.

It was objectively better not to sacrifice the exchange with 14...♘b4 even though after 15.♕e4 cxb5 16.♕g4 with ♘e4 and so on White has a threatening position on the kingside. However, the position remains objectively balanced.

15.♘xd5 exd5 16.♗xa5 ♘c6 17.♗xb6 ♕xb6 18.♖a8 Compared to the position in the notes to White's 14th move we see that here the open a-file makes things easier for White as he can activate his rooks. The engine prefers 18.♕d2 or 18.h4, immediately starting play on the kingside.

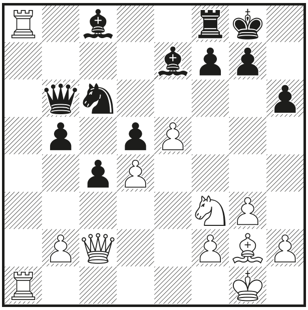
TATA STEEL CHESS TOURNAMENT

18...h6?! Generally a useful move, but there were more urgent issues at hand, like eliminating the active rook on a8.

18...♘xd4? is bad as it opens the d-file for White. After 19.♘xd4 ♕xd4 20.♖d1 ♕xe5 21.♖xd5 ♕e1+ 22.♗f1 the rooks tear Black's position apart.

18...♗e6! was a decent move, immediately addressing the rook on a8. After 19.♖xf8+ ♗xf8 20.♖d1 h6 Black has a solid position.

19.♖fa1



A good human move! Now if the bishop goes to e6 White can retreat the rook to a6 if necessary and avoid the exchange.

19.♖xc8! is the shocking engine revelation, returning the exchange in return for control over the light squares. After 19...♖xc8 20.♕f5 ♖f8 21.e6 it claims that White's initiative is decisive. I won't argue with an engine, but this is incredibly difficult for a human (even a World Champion!) to process.

19...♗e6 19...b4 20.♕d2 defends d4 and intends a kingside expansion as Black cannot do much with his queenside pawn duo. *(20.♖xc8! again works with the same idea of ♕f5 and e6.)*

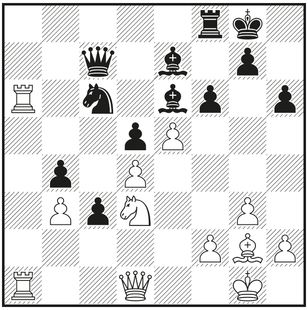
20.♕d1 Defending the pawn on d4 and leaving a possibility of ♕a1 in case Black exchanges on a8.

20...b4 21.b3! Preventing Black's idea of ...b3 followed by ...♘b4-d3.

21...c3 22.♖8a6 Avoiding the exchange of rooks with tempo. White is winning as the protected passed pawn on c3 isn't going anywhere, while White can prepare the advance of his kingside pawns after ♘e1-c2, f4, g4 etc.

22...♕c7 23.♘e1 f6 This speeds up the end but Mamedyarov didn't want to wait passively to be overrun on the kingside.

24.♘d3!



Getting in touch with the challenged e5-square.

24...fxe5 24...♘xd4 is met by 25.♖xe6! ♘xe6 26.♗xd5 ♕d7 27.♘f4, winning a piece.

25.♘xe5 ♘xe5 26.♖xe6 c2 27.♕e1 Black resigned because after 27.♕e1 ♗g5 28.dxe5 c1♕ 29.♖xc1 ♕xc1 30.♕xc1 ♗xc1 31.♗xd5 White is two pawns up with an easily winning position.

1-0

The ease with which Carlsen dispatched one of the strongest players in the world is fascinating.

Carlsen made a small step towards his goal of 2900, gaining a mere three rating points, but the tendency is certainly a positive one. The only problem is that it's not quite clear when we will see the World Champion in classical action again. As things stand at the time of writing, the Meltwater Champions Tour will again dominate elite chess with the classical time controls with, Carlsen's participation returning in the summer at the earliest.

TATA STEEL CHESS TOURNAMENT 2022

TATA STEEL CHESS TOURNAMENT - Standings

Rk	TEAM	Score	Rtg	SB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	**Carlsen, Magnus**	9.5/13	2865	60.25		1	1	1	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	1	½	1
2	**Mamedyarov, Shakhriyar**	8/13	2767	49	0		½	½	½	1	½	½	1	1	½	1	½	½
3	**Rapport, Richard**	8/13	2763	47.25	0	½		½	½	1	½	1	0	½	½	1	1	1
4	**Giri, Anish**	7.5/13	2772	44.5	0	½	½		½	0	1	1	½	½	1	½	½	1
5	**Karjakin, Sergey**	7/13	2743	45.25	½	½	½	½		1	0	½	½	1	0	1	½	½
6	**Van Foreest, Jorden**	7/13	2702	41.75	½	0	0	1	0		0	½	½	1	1	1	1	½
7	**Esipenko, Andrey**	6.5/13	2714	42.75	½	½	½	0	1	1		½	½	½	½	0	½	½
8	**Caruana, Fabiano**	6.5/13	2792	37.75	0	½	0	0	½	½	½		1	½	½	1	1	½
9	**Duda, Jan-Krzysztof**	6/13	2760	39.25	½	0	1	½	½	½	½	0		½	½	½	½	½
10	**Vidit, Santosh Gujrathi**	6/13	2727	35.5	½	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	½		1	0	1	1
11	**Shankland, Sam**	5.5/13	2708	36	½	½	½	0	1	0	½	½	½	0		½	½	½
12	**Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa**	5.5/13	2612	30	0	0	0	½	0	0	1	0	½	1	½		1	1
13	**Grandelius, Nils**	4.5/13	2672	28.5	½	½	0	½	½	0	½	0	½	0	½	0		1
14	**Dubov, Daniil**	3.5/13	2720	23.25	0	½	0	0	½	½	½	½	½	0	½	0	0	

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WORLD NO 3, **DING LIREN** ON CHESS AND LIFE:

IT'S COLD IN HIGH PLACES

The British Chess Magazine and CGTN Europe - part of the China Global Television Network – interviewed the World No 3 and strongest Chinese player ever, Ding Liren (29).

In this wide-ranging interview the world's third top-rated player talked about the Dubai match, Carlsen's remark about Firouzja being the only one who could motivate him to defend the world crown and the difference in style between European and Eastern players, as well as how expectations of others affect his play. Ding Liren also discussed his life, dealing with loneliness, travels around Europe and his experience in the UK.

The interview was conducted via a video link, in Mandarin, by Yubin Du of CGTN Europe, while BCM supplied part of the questions. Ding Liren was speaking from his home in Wenzhou, in Southeast China.

The World No 3 began by explaining how things stand right now in his life:

- I'm done with school. I'm a professional chess player now. I was competing in tournaments around the world but these two years with the pandemic it has been very inconvenient to go abroad and most of the events – both here in China and elsewhere - are usually online. The next big thing for me is the Grand Prix competition, which is a part of the world championship cycle. If I perform well, I hope to have the opportunity to participate in the candidate race to challenge.

[After this interview it transpired that Ding Liren was unable to participate in the first leg of the Grand Prix In Berlin, as he did not get a visa for Germany. As he explained, he was unable to secure his visa on time. However, it is planned that he will take part in the second leg of the Grand Prix event, in Belgrade (Serbia) in March, although, at the time of writing this article this is still not clear – Note, BCM]

BCM/CGTN: Who taught you chess in the beginning? How did you get into chess?

D.L. At first, when I was four years old, my mom sent me to a sports society in Wenzhou to learn chess. I was probably more focused and obsessed with the 32 pieces in 64 squares than most children.

BCM/CGTN: Which player has influenced you the most?

D.L: There is a Spanish Grandmaster called Vallejo Pons. He's not particularly famous, but I think his openings are very thoughtful. Then there is [Veselin] Topalov from Bulgaria - I like his style very much; he is aggressive and he often has some whimsical ideas. However, I like and admire Magnus Carlsen the most.

BCM/CGTN: What do you have to say about Carlsen?

D.L: He's the best chess player right now. I'm probably the challenger, he's won too many titles. Carlsen has a very well-rounded style - a smooth and delicate style of play. He is not afraid of some particularly complicated positions.

BCM/CGTN: What are your impressions of the match between Carlsen and Nepo in Dubai in December 2021?

D.L: I was following it very closely all the time. Before the match, my prediction was that Carlsen would win with 7.5 to 5.5, but it was a much more confident victory which I didn't anticipate. Nepo's collapse in the second half happened quicker, but I didn't expect it to be that dramatic.

BCM/CGTN: What do you make of Magnus Carlsen's comment that Alireza Firouzja is the only one who might motivate him to defend his world championship crown?

D.L: Alireza Firouzja's rise is very strong. He's the word's number two. I've been ranked number two-three in the world for the last couple of years. I guess the question is, what do I think of this?

I am a little bit more low key. I still kind of like not being in the focus.

I remember after the tournament in London [the final stage of the 2019 Grand Chess Tour] that, because I won the event, many people saw me as the challenger for the world championship, which put a lot of pressure on me. The following year I played very poorly in the first tournament. I probably put myself under all this pressure. I think that before the 2019 London tournament, people did not think very highly of me. I probably played my best under those circumstances.

BCM/CGTN: Do expectations of others affect your performance?

D.L: At least until two years ago, that was the case. Overall, I think it's better to be more modest, more low-key. If people always talk about you, always put eyes on you, you sometimes don't know how to act in public.

BCM/CGTN: You were seen as one of the favourites to win the 2020-2021 Candidates, but the tournament did not really go well for you. In hindsight, what went wrong and what have you changed to improve?

D.L: What I just said is one of the reasons. There was also the outbreak of the pandemic. I came to Russia early, and the preparation for the event at that time was also not done adequately - there was no adequate professional technology, which is more the main reason.

BCM/CGTN: I'm curious about the relationship between playing chess and a person's personality. For example, I'm an active type of person and I think it would be hard for me to focus on something like chess. Does it have anything to do with this?

D.L: Chess players, no matter if they are introverted or extroverted, all have a very calm and steady side. When they are playing, they can concentrate on the board and think about the game and the possible changes. It’s a trait.

BCM/CGTN: You've played all over the world. Where did you feel the most comfortable?

D.L: I'll say it was the tournament in England, the finals of the Grand Chess Tour in 2019. It was the first time I went to London. There were only four of us playing and the conditions and the prize fund were very good. I won the final by defeating Levon Aronian by a pretty big margin in the semi-finals and then winning against Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in the finals. I went to that tournament alone, without anyone to accompany me. The organizers booked a hotel for me, and they didn't show up. I found the hotel and stayed there by myself but it all worked out. I have very fond memories of that event because I won the championship in the end. Also, while in London, I went to see the Arsenal stadium.

A decade ago: At the
Istanbul Chess Olympiad in 2012
(photo: David Llada)

BCM/CGTN: Are you a football fan?

D.L: I am. I like Juventus the most.

BCM/CGTN: Does anyone accompany you to the events?

D.L: Sometimes. I used to go with my teammates, sometimes my coach would accompany me, and then sometimes it was my family. The higher the level, the higher the standard of competition, the fewer people you have to accompany you.

BCM/CGTN: So, do you get a feeling of being lonely?

D.L: The Chinese saying goes – it's cold in high places (高处不胜寒).

BCM/CGTN: I'd like to ask when does this feeling of loneliness come out more? Is it more intense when you're closer to the top in what you do? Is this feeling also reflected in your life? I don't know if it's convenient to say, for example, if you have a girlfriend?

D.L: Girlfriend, yes. But companionship, especially abroad, now that's very difficult. There are a lot of procedures that a person has to go through. One of them is getting a visa – it's very troublesome. But, overall, I feel that my career and my way of life may be a little different from my peers around me, especially compared to my former classmates and friends.

BCM/CGTN: Chess is very demanding. You started at a very young age, playing all kinds of tournaments. You then studied for a law degree. How did you organise your time and have all this energy to focus on different things?

D.L: When I started, in elementary school and high school, I focused more on education. I only participated in chess competitions during the summer and winter holidays. After completing homework every day, I devoted my time to training in chess. After high school, I slowly shifted my focus to chess, and then I took a year off from school and went to many open tournaments at home and abroad.

After I finished my high school entrance exams, one year later I was recommended to enter the law department of Peking University. It was indeed very difficult, so my goal was to graduate. I put more energy into tournaments when I was at PKU. I was probably different from other students at that time because they might have the knowledge they learnt at PKU that might be useful for life, while I might have made a good decision to become a professional chess player at that time.

BCM/CGTN: What are the three things you miss most about China when you're abroad?

D.L: The small yellow fish dish at home in Wenzhou. Walking in front of my house. What I've been thinking about lately is reading a book before bed.

BCM/CGTN: What have you been reading lately?

D.L: I like to read novels. I am currently reading the last book of the Neapolitan quartet.

THE IMPACT OF COMPUTERS ON CHESS IS DEFINITELY NEGATIVE

BCM/CGTN: Do you think computers have had a more positive or a more negative impact on chess? Have they taken something away from the game?

D.L: If the future of chess is a little bit longer term, then the impact is definitely negative.

I use computers more than books for my preparation. A computer is so much better than humans that it will analyse some positions so thoroughly that there will be no content to the position. The human game in the future can, therefore, only be an imitation, without any creation, or it will only be a memory [game]. Remember the answers provided by the computer, and then there is no room for improvement.

But computers can help a lot with human strength, by training with them. Also, grandmasters used to be particularly arrogant, and sometimes, without listening to others, they would just say 'I think this [move] is right, and you guys might have different ideas, but it's just that I'm still going to stick to my own opinion'. But now a grandmaster will be ridiculed if they still think that way after the game because the computer can prove if they were wrong.

BCM/CGTN: When you think of England, what's the first thing that comes to your mind?

D.L: A rainy day. Pedestrians walking briskly with briefcases.

BCM/CGTN: What is the one thing you always carry with you in your luggage? For example, when you visited England?

D.L: When I came to the UK I remember bringing a pot to cook porridge. Not really a pot, a simple, smaller one. I was too lazy to go out to eat at noon and, also, I needed to prepare for the games, so the pot came in handy.

BCM/CGTN: What do you do to relax when you play and after you play? Do you watch movies and TV shows? For example, there's Queen's Gambit on Netflix – have you seen it?

D.L: No, I haven't seen it. I never watch TV series. Instead, I prefer to read books, occasionally watch movies, or listen to some audio programs. Still Chinese content is the main content.

BCM/CGTN: What do you listen to? News? Or fiction?

D.L: Some social science content.

BCM/CGTN: What do you think about the European opponents, what are the differences between them? Or is there anything in particular that they have in common or different? Is there a very clear difference in their tactics in general, especially compared to Eastern players?

D.L: There might be a little bit of difference. Compared to us [in the East], European players may be a little bit more adventurous in their play. Sometimes, I think we will open the game very carefully and play our own prepared lines. We will not go to territory that neither side is familiar with… But European players are kind of creative, more adventurous. They sometimes play out of the box, just with some innovations.

BCM/CGTN: Do you think there's any particular difference in the interest for chess in Europe and China, among the general population?

D.L: In the general public chess is more popular and more widespread in Europe. Since chess there has a much longer history in Europe and it's the only important board game there, besides checkers. I saw a lot of people on the streets of Europe who play outside, with a chessboard. In China, Chinese chess is more popular.

BCM/CGTN: Do you play Chinese chess yourself? Do you think the two have anything in common?

D.L: I just know the rules of Chinese chess. I don't play it very well. I didn't learn it professionally, but there's still a big difference compared to chess.

BCM/CGTN: Thinking about the development of chess in China, do you feel it is getting enough support? Is there a high level of participation from the general public? What is the general situation?

D.L: The current policy in China is to promote and popularise the game, through

THE NATURAL BEAUTIES OF SCOTLAND AND SHARK SOUP IN ICELAND

BCM/CGTN: What are your impressions of Europe? Are there any particular places you like?

D.L: I like Europe a lot. The last time I travelled there, excluding Russia, was before the pandemic. That time I travelled with my father to several European countries - Scotland, the Czech Republic and Norway. In terms of food, I like panini and lasagne.

BCM/CGTN: What are some of the things that you were impressed by or liked more in particular?

D.L: The natural beauties of Scotland left a big impression on me. I like the lawns there, there are big green lawns. I also like Scottish castles in the Highlands.

BCM/CGTN: Have you eaten anything odd or special in Europe?

D.L: I had shark soup in Iceland. I remember the smell – it was really good.

programmes like chess in schools, so more children can learn to play chess. The hope is that one day they will become, if not professional chess players, but enthusiasts, or people who can appreciate chess. Of course, this will take time. Right now, the number of spectators for Chinese chess tournaments is not particularly high, either in person or online. I think the Chinese chess association is still working on promoting the game.

BCM/CGTN: What advice would you give to a beginner or a child interested in chess

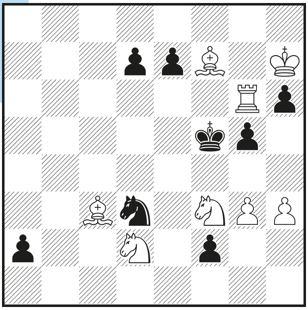
D.L: For beginners, you have to buy good looking chess pieces! Just look at some great games and let a grandmaster talk to you about why they're great, and go into the game from an appreciation point of view first. Have some fun and get some pleasure out of it along the way.

PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones
cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk
Grandmaster of Chess Composition

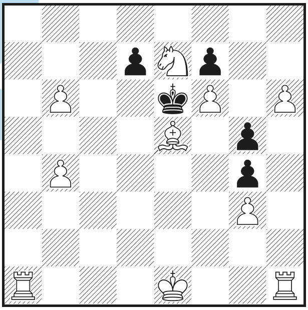
Solutions are given on page 126

1



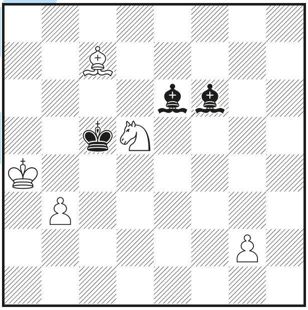
David Shire (Canterbury)
Mate in 2
ORIGINAL

2



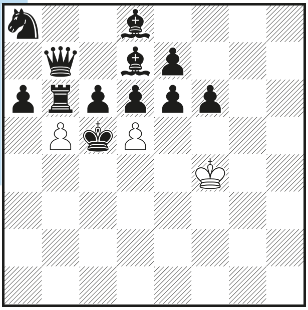
Paul Michelet (London)
Mate in 4
ORIGINAL *after A. Johandl*

3



Jozef Lozek (Slovakia)
Helpmate in 2 (b) Kc5>h4
ORIGINAL

4



Michael McDowell (Westcliff-on-Sea)
Helpmate in 3.5 2 solutions
ORIGINAL

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THE CLASH OF THE ENGLISH AND WORLD ELITE

By IM Shaun Taulbut; Photo: London Classic Official

The 12th edition of the London Chess Classic took place in December 2021, bringing together strong British players, some world stars and a chess audience which, due to covid restrictions, spent the last two years mostly in online arenas.

There were two key events - the *England v Rest of the World Match* and the rapid tournament. Here are some of the most interesting games from the two events.

THE ENGLAND VS THE REST OF THE WORLD MATCH

The big event of the festival was the *England v Rest of the World Match* which took place over six days.

On the England Team were Michael Adams, Gawain Jones and Luke McShane and for the Rest of the World Boris Gelfand, Nikita Vitiugov and Maxime Lagarde.

Each player played six games against the opposing team, one with each colour against each opposing team member. The Rest of the World managed to clinch a victory with just half a point ahead of England.

For the Rest of the World Boris Gelfand scored 3.5/6, Nikita Vitiugov 4/6 and Maxime Lagarde 2/6.

For England Michael Adams scored 3/6. Gawain Jones 3.5/6 and Luke McShane 2/6. We look at some of the key games starting with the victory of Gawain Jones over Maxime Lagarde.

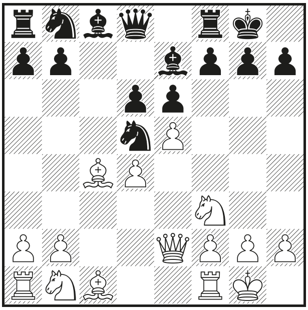
12th LCC ENG v ROW 2021 London ENG Fri 3rd Dec 2021 - Sun 12th Dec 2021
Leading Final Round 6 Standings:

Rk	TEAM	1	2	3	4	5	6	Pts
1	Rest of World	2	0.5	2	2	1	2	9.5
2	England	1	2.5	1	1	2	1	8.5

Gawain Jones - Maxime **Lagarde**

12th LCC ENG v ROW 2021 London ENG (5.2)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘d5 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4 d6 7.♗c4 ♗e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♕e2

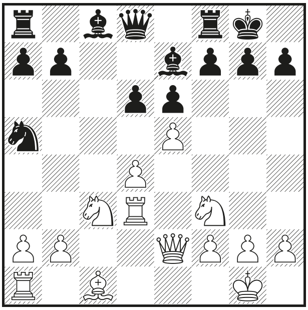


White prepares ♖d1 defending d4; he is ahead in development but no immediate plan.

9...♘c6 10.♖d1 ♘a5 Black is tempted by the possibility of removing the White light squared bishop but this takes time.

11.♗d3 ♘b4 12.♘c3 Not 12.♗e4 d5; or if 12.exd6 ♕xd6 13.♗e4 f5 forces the exchange of the bishop

12...♘xd3 13.♖xd3



White has an advantage in development to compensate for the loss of the two bishops; this position favours White.

13...d5 Black closes the position, otherwise White may be able to play d5 himself.

14.♘e1 Preparing to swing the rook to the kingside and attack g7.

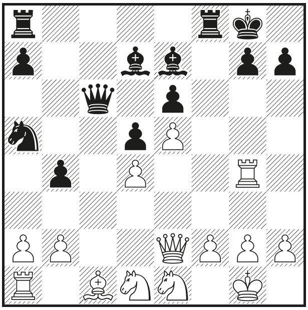
14...♕e8 14...f5 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.♗f4 is slightly better for White.

15.♖g3 f5 16.♘b5 16.exf6 ♗xf6 17.♘f3 ♘c6 18.♗e3 also leaves White with a slight edge.

16...f4 After 16...♕d7 17.♗g5 gives White a slightly better position.

17.♖g4 ♕c6 18.♖xf4 ♗d7 19.♘c3 b5 Black has compensation for the pawn with play on the queenside.

20.♖g4 b4 21.♘d1



21...♕a4 21...♕c4 22.♕xc4 dxc4 23.♗h6 ♖f7 24.♖c1 ♖c8 with compensation for the pawn looks best here.

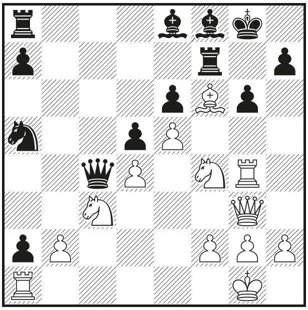
22.♗h6 ♖f7 23.♕e3 Stopping...♘b3 and also planning a further assault on the black king.

23...b3 24.♘c3 ♕c4 25.♘d3 White plans ♘f4 when the knight can go to h5.

25...bxa2 26.♕g3 ♗f8 27.♘f4 With the threat of ♘h5 when Black must play ...g6.

27...♔h8 28.♘h5 g6 29.♗g5 29.♗xf8 ♖axf8 30.♘f6 is also very strong here.

29...♗e8 30.♗f6+ ♔g8 31.♘f4 White is ready to sacrifice on g6 so Black moves his rook.



31...♖b7 32.♖xa2 Calmly preventing an invasion on b2.

32...♗b4 33.♖a1 White guards the back rank against captures by Black on c3.

33...♘b3 34.♖d1 ♗f7 35.h4 ♘xd4 36.♘xg6 hxg6 37.♖dxd4 Black resigned as next move White can start a winning attack with ♖xg6+.

1-0

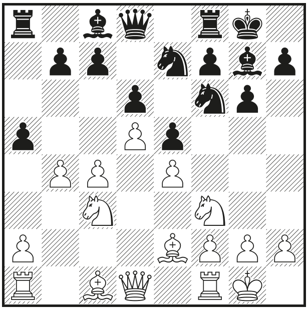
……

In the last round the Rest of the World scored two wins to capture the match, Gelfand and Vitiugov both playing very well

Boris **Gelfand** – Gawain **Jones**

12th LCC ENG v ROW 2021 London ENG (6.2)

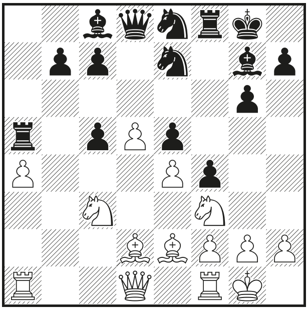
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.♗e2 e5 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e7 9.b4 a5



A traditional King's Indian.

10.bxa5 ♖xa5 11.a4 ♘e8 12.♗e3 f5 13.c5 A surprising pawn sacrifice 13.♘g5 is also worth consideration.

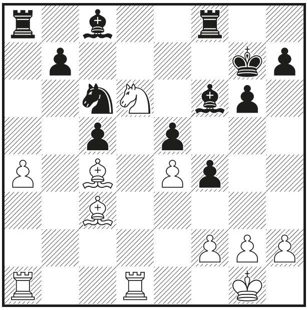
13...f4 14.♗d2 dxc5



If 14...♖xc5 15.♕b3 ♘f6 16.♗d3 gives White an advantage.

15.♘b5 ♖a8 16.♗c3 c6 17.dxc6 ♕xd1 18.♖fxd1 ♘xc6 19.♗c4+ $h8 20.♘g5 White has compensation for the pawn with his active pieces.

20...♗f6 21.♘f7+ ♔g7 22.♘fd6 ♘xd6 23.♘xd6



23...♘d4 24.♖db1 ♖a7 25.a5 White has pressure on b7 and it is difficult for Black.

25...f3 If 25...♗e7 26.♖b6 retains the pressure.

26.♖a2 Guarding e2 so forcing Black to make a decision.

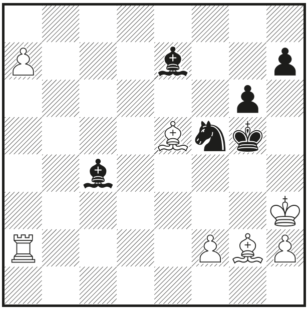
Looking for that best move: Boris Gelfand

26...♗d7 27.♖xb7 ♖xb7 28.♘xb7 ♗c6 After 28...♗b5 29.♗xb5 ♘xb5 30.♘xc5 ♘xc3 31.♘e6+ ♔f7 32.♘xf8 ♘xa2 33.a6 Black cannot catch the a-pawn with his minor pieces.

29.♘xc5 ♖b8 30.gxf3 ♘xf3+ 31.♔g2 ♘h4+ 32.♔g3 ♔h6 33.a6 ♗e7 34.♘e6 ♗xe4 35.♗xe5 ♖g8 35...♘f5+ 36.♔f4 ♖b4 37.♔xe4 ♖xc4+ 38.♔d5 ♖c8 39.a7 is winning.

36.♘g5 ♔xg5 37.♗xg8 ♘f5+ 38.♔h3 ♗d3 threatening mate.

39.♗d5 ♗f1+ 40.♗g2 ♗c4 41.a7



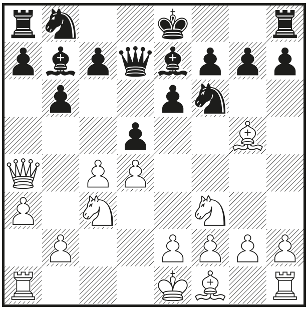
White queens his pawn.

1-0

Nikita **Vitiugov** – Luke **McShane**

12th LCC ENG v ROW 2021 London ENG (6.3)

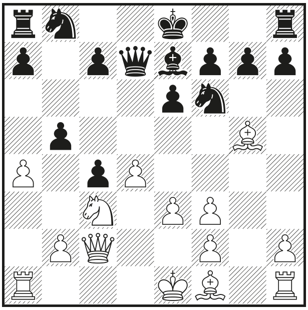
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♗b7 5.♘c3 d5 6.♗g5 ♗e7 7.♕a4+ ♕d7



7...♘bd7 8.♗xf6 ♗xf6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.e3 c6 is slightly better for White.

8.♕c2 dxc4 9.e3 ♗xf3 10.gxf3 b5 A double edged plan, hanging onto the pawn.

11.a4

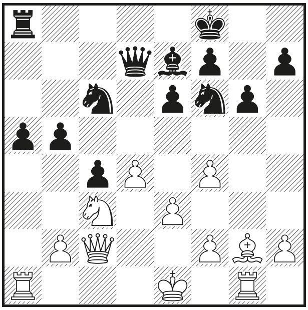


11...c6 12.♖g1 0-0 Black allows White to play ♗h6 and has in mind an exchange sacrifice.

13.f4 13.♗h6 g6 14.♗xf8 ♔xf8 15.f4 is similar to the game.

13...a5 14.axb5 cxb5 15.♗h6 g6 A sound positional sacrifice; if 15...♘e8 16.♕e4 ♖a6 17.♕e5 ♗f6 18.♕xb5 is slightly better for White.

16.♗xf8 ♔xf8 17.♗g2 ♘c6



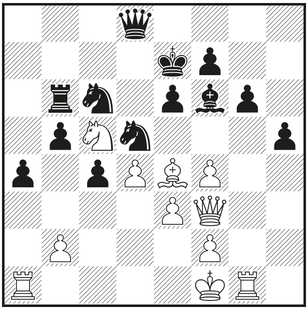
18.♕e2 Not 18.♘xb5 ♘b4 19.♕xc4 ♖c8 20.♕e2 ♖c2 is winning for Black.

18...♖b8 19.♘e4 a4 20.♔f1 ♘d5 Black has an edge with his strong queenside pawn mass.

21.h4 h5 22.♗f3 ♗xh4 23.♘c5 ♕d6 24.♘e4 ♕d7 25.♘c5 ♕d6 26.♘e4 ♕d8 Avoiding the repetition as he has the better position.

27.♘c5 ♔e7 28.♗e4 White considers a sacrifice on g6.

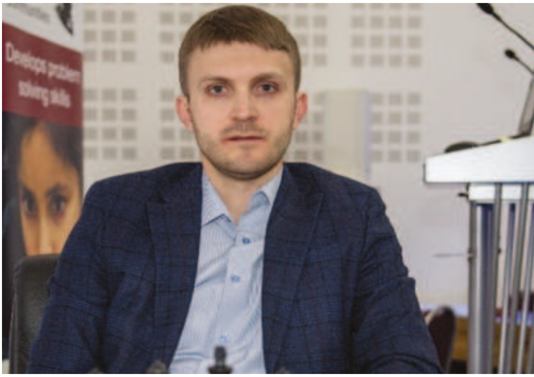
28...♗f6 29.♕f3 ♖b6



30.♗xg6 The best practical try trying to get at the black king.

30...♘xd4 30...fxg6 31.♖xg6 ♘cb4 32.♕xh5 ♕h8 33.♖h6 keeps the attack going.

31.exd4 ♗xd4 32.♗xf7 White sacrifices to expose the black king.



With 4/6, Russian Nikita Vitiugov had the best performance of all the players in the England vs The Rest of the World Match

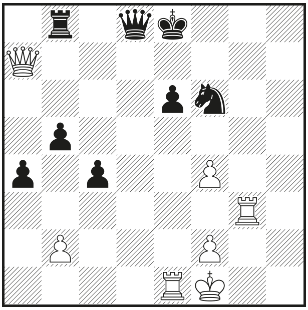
32...♗xc5 If 32...$xf7 (*33.♖d1 is strong eg 33.. ♗xc5 34.♕xh5+ ♔e7 35.♖g7+ ♔d6 36.♖xd5+ exd5 37.♕g6+ leads to mate)* 33.♕xh5+.

33.♕xh5 33.♖d1 is strong here.

33...♘f6 34.♕xc5+ ♔xf7 35.♖g3 Stopping a check on d3.

35...♖b8 After 35...♖d6 36.♕xb5 ♖d1+ 37.♖xd1 ♕xd1+ 38.♔g2 ♕d5+ 39.♕xd5 ♘xd5 40.♔f3 c3 41.bxc3 ♘xc3 42.♖g1 a3 43.♖a1 a2 44.♔e3 ♔f6 45.♔d3 ♘d5 46.♔d4 ♘xf4 47.♖xa2 ♔f5 48.♖a5+ ♘d5 49.♖a7 ♘f6 50.♖e7 ♘d5 51.♖f7+ ♘f6 52.♖f8 e5+ 53.♔e3 White is much better.

36.♕a7+ ♔e8 37.♖e1



12th LCC ENG v ROW 2021 London ENG Fri 3rd Dec 2021 - Sun 12th Dec 2021
Leading Final Round 6 Standings:

Rk	TEAM	Elo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts	TPR
1	**GM** McShane, Luke J	2655		=	=	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	7	2726
2	**GM** Jones, Gawain C B	2655	=		1	=	0	1	1	1	1	1	7	2725
3	**GM** Speelman, Jon S	2504	=	0		1	=	1	=	=	1	=	5.5	2603
4	**GM** Adams, Michael	2700	0	=	0		1	=	1	=	1	1	5.5	2581
5	**IM** Ghasi, Ameet K	2485	0	1	=	0		0	1	=	1	1	5	2568
6	**FM** Harvey, Marcus R	2464	0	0	0	=	1		1	0	1	1	4.5	2528
7	**IM** Trent, Lawrence	2401	0	0	=	0	0	0		1	1	=	3	2410
8	**IM** Haria, Ravi	2491	0	0	=	=	=	1	0		0	0	2.5	2359
9	**IM** Horton, Andrew P	2366	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		=	2.5	237
10	**GM** Gormally, Daniel W	2483	0	0	=	0	0	0	=	1	=		2.5	2360

37...♕d6 38.♖xe6+ ♕xe6 39.♖e3 ♖b6

39...♕xe3 40.♕xb8+; 39...♘e4 40.♕xb8+ ♔f7 41.♕b7+ wins

40.♕xb6

1-0

THE ENGLISH RAPID

After the England vs Rest of the World Match, a Rapid tournament was held with the top English players.

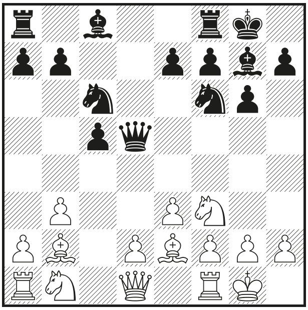
Gawain Jones won the play off against Luke McShane, both having scored 7/9 in the tournament.Gawain Jones tactical ability was very much in evidence in these two wins with Black against Jon Speelman and Andew Horton.

Jon **Speelman** – Gawain **Jones**

12th LCC English Rapid London ENG (2.4)

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.b3 ♗g7 4.♗b2 c5 5.e3 0-0 6.♗e2 ♘c6 7.0-0 d5 Black chooses to free his position before White gets fully developed.

8.cxd5 ♕xd5



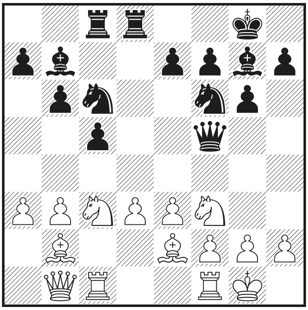
The most ambitious recapture but also the best, the alternative 8...♘xd5 9.♗xg7 $xg7 10.♕c1 ♕a5 leads to a quieter game.

9.♘c3 ♕f5 A good position for the queen eyeing d3.

10.♖c1 ♖d8 11.d3 b6 Black has active play with both ...♗b7 or ...♗a6.

12.a3 ♗b7 If 12...♗a6 13.d4 cxd4 *(13...♗xe2 14.♘xe2 ♖ac8 is worth consideration)* 14.♘xd4 ♘xd4 15.♗xa6 is almost equal so Black maintains the tension.

13.♕c2 ♖ac8 14.♕b1

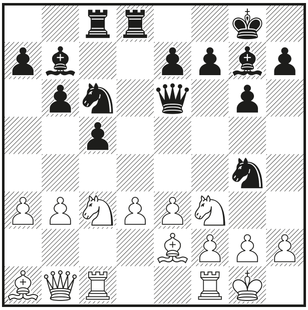


14.♘e4 h6 looks best here for White.

14...♕e6 Aiming at b3, also 14...♘a5 is playable.

15.♗a1 Possible is 15.♘g5 ♕d7 *(Not 15...♕xb3 16.♗d1)* 16.♘ce4 h6 17.♘xf6+ exf6 18.♘e4 ♕e7 with a slight edge for Black.

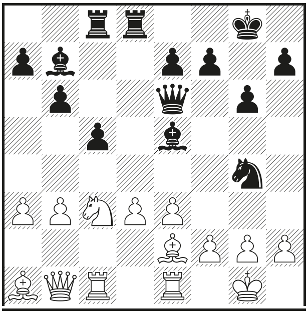
15...♘g4



16.♖fe1 If 16.h3 ♘xe3 17.fxe3 ♕xe3+ 18.♖f2 ♘d4 19.♖e1 ♗xf3 20.♗xf3 ♘xf3+ 21.gxf3 ♕f4 22.♘e2 ♕g5+ 23.♖g2 ♕e3+ 24.♔h2 ♗xa1 25.♕xa1 ♖xd3 with complicated play favouring Black, now Black gets all his pieces into play.

16...♘ce5 17.♘xe5 ♗xe5

Gawain Jones



The Black minor pieces attack the white king forcing a weakness in the king position.

18.h3 Better is 18.♗xg4 ♕xg4 19.e4 ♖d7; If 18.g3 ♘xf2 19.♔xf2 ♕h3 20.♖f1 ♕xh2+ 21.♔e1 ♗xg3+ 22.♔d1 e5 23.♖c2 ♕h6 24.e4 ♗f4 with an edge for Black.

18...♗h2+ 19.♔f1 After 19.♔h1 ♘xf2+ 20.♔xh2 ♕e5+ 21.♔g1 ♘xh3+ 22.♔h1 ♕g3 23.e4 ♘f4 24.♗f1 ♖c6 25.♘e2 ♕h4+ 26.♔g1 ♘xd3 is winning.

19...♘xe3+ 20.fxe3 ♕f5+

0-1

Andrew P **Horton** – Gawain **Jones**

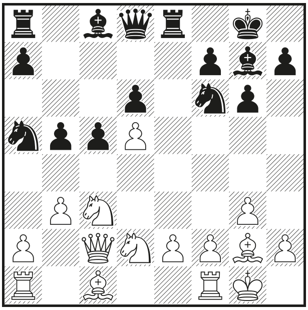
12th LCC English Rapid London ENG (4.5)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.♘c3 d6 6.♘f3 c5 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘a5 9.♘d2 The Panno variation.

9...e6 Immediately attacking the White centre.

10.♕c2 ♖e8 Logical and good.

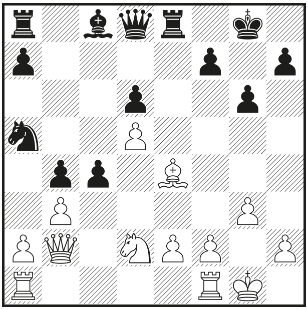
11.b3 exd5 12.cxd5 b5



Black expands quickly taking advantage of the pressure on e2.

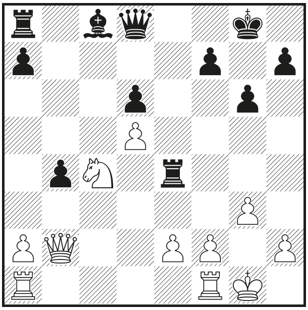
13.♗b2 After 13.♘xb5 ♖xe2 Black is better.

13...b4 14.♘ce4 ♘xe4 15.♗xe4 ♗xb2 16.♕xb2 c4



A forcing move leading to exchanges and tactics.

17.bxc4 ♘xc4 18.♘xc4 ♖xe4

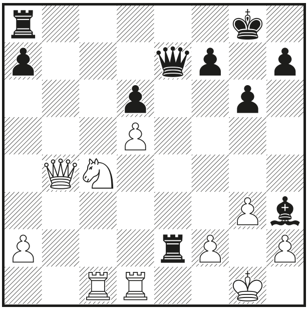


Black has play on the light squares around the white king.

19.♖ac1 Possible is 19.♖fc1 ♗a6 20.♘e3 ♕e7; but not 19.♕xb4 ♗a6 20.♖fc1 ♕c8 wins material for Black.

19...♕e7 20.♕xb4 ♗h3 21.♖fd1 21.♖fe1 ♖c8 is critical eg 22.♕xd6 ♕e8 23.♕b4 *(23.♘e3 ♖xc1 24.♖xc1 ♖xe3 25.♕c6 ♕e5 26.♕c7 ♕xc7 27.♖xc7 ♖xe2 28.♖c1 ♖d2 winning)* 23...♖xe2 24.♘d6 ♖xc1 25.♖xc1 ♕e5 and White cannot defend all of his weaknesses.

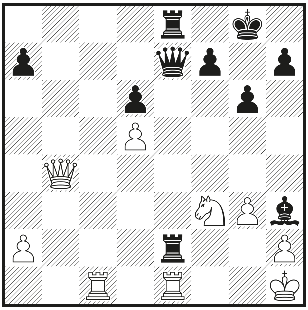
21...♖xe2



Now White is badly exposed down the e-file.

22.♘d2 ♖e8 23.♘f3 23.♕f4 ♖e1+ *(23...h5 is better for Black)* 24.♘f1 is a defence as 24...♗xf1 25.♖xe1 ♕xe1 26.♖xe1 ♖xe1 27.♕b4 ♖d1 28.f3 is winning for White.

23...♖xf2 24.♖e1 ♖g2+ 25.♔h1 ♖e2



26.♖xe2 ♕xe2 27.♘g1 ♗g2#

0-1

Luke McShane had a heavyweight struggle against Michael Adams and ground out an important win.

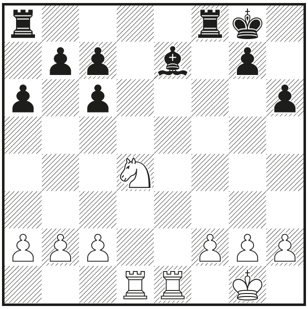
Luke **McShane** - Michael **Adams**

12th LCC English Rapid London ENG (1.5)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗xc6 dxc6 5.0-0 ♗d6 6.d4 exd4 7.♕xd4 f6 8.♘bd2 ♗e6 9.e5 White chooses to liquidate the centre.

9...fxe5 10.♘xe5 ♘e7 11.♖e1 0-0 12.♘df3 ♗d5 13.♗g5 h6 13...♗xf3 14.♗xe7 ♗xe7 15.♘xf3 ♕xd4 16.♘xd4 ♗c5 17.♘f3 ♖ad8 18.♖ad1 ♖d5 is equal.

14.♗xe7 ♗xe7 15.♖ad1 ♗xf3 16.♘xf3 ♕xd4 17.♘xd4



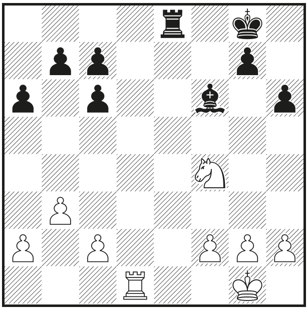
Develops p
solving sk

Michael Adams

White has a slight edge but no more.

17...♗f6 18.b3 18.♘e6 ♖f7 19.c3 ♖e7 20.♔f1 with a slight edge 20...♖ae8 21.♘c5 b6 22.♘xa6 ♖a8 23.♖xe7 ♗xe7 24.♖d7 ♖xa6 25.♖xe7 ♖xa2 26.♖xc7 ♖xb2 27.♖xc6.

18...♖ad8 19.♘e6 ♖xd1 20.♖xd1 ♖e8 21.♘f4



21.♘xc7 ♖e7 22.♘a8 ♖e2 is better for Black as the knight is badly placed.

21...♖e5 After 21...g5 22.♘d3 ♖e2 23.♖c1 g4 24.♔f1 ♖d2 Black is slightly better as he can defend the rook on d2 with ...♗c3.

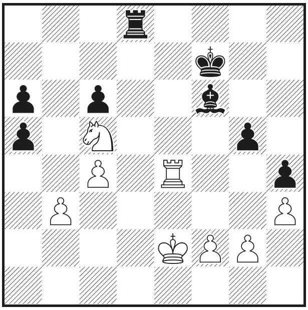
22.♘d3 ♖a5 22...♖e2 23.♖c1 ♔f7 24.♔f1 ♖d2 25.g3 g5 is similar to 21..g5 above.

23.a4 h5 23...b5 24.♘c5 bxa4 25.♘xa4 is slightly better for White.

24.♖e1 ♔f7 25.♔f1 ♖f5 26.♖e4 c5 27.♔e2 h4 28.h3 28.f4 is worth consideration.

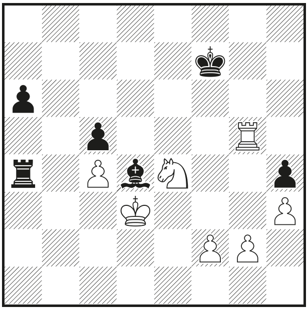
28...b6 29.♘e1 ♖d5 30.♘f3 g5 31.♘e1 ♗c3 32.♘d3 ♗f6 33.♔f3 c6 34.♔e3 ♗d4+ 35.♔e2 ♗f6 36.c4 ♖d8 36...♖d4 37.♖xd4 ♗xd4 38.♔f3 ♔e6 39.♔g4 ♔f6 40.f4 with an edge for White is not as good.

37.a5 bxa5 38.♘xc5



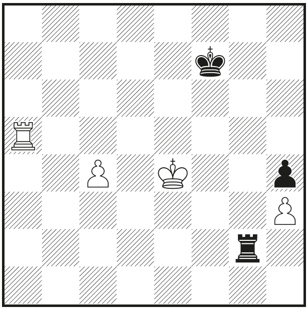
The White knight captures one of the weak pawns but Black has counterplay against b3.

38...♖b8 39.♖e3 ♗d4 40.♖f3+ ♔g6 41.♘e4 a4 42.bxa4 ♖b4 43.♔d3 c5 44.♖f8 ♖xa4 45.♖g8+ ♔f7 46.♖xg5



White has the edge but the position simplifies soon to a pure rook ending.

46...♖a3+ 47.♔e2 ♖a2+ 48.♔f3 a5 49.♘xc5 ♖xf2+ 50.♔e4 ♗xc5 51.♖xc5 ♖xg2 52.♖xa5

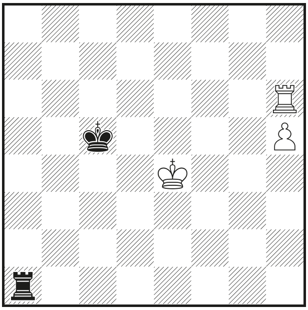


White has winning chances with his extra passed pawn.

52...♖g3 Better is 52...♖c2 53.♔d4 ♖d2+ 54.♔c3 ♖h2 55.♖f5+ ♔e6 56.♖f3 ♔d6 57.♔b4 ♔c6 blocking the White pawn.

53.♖f5+ ♔e6 54.♖f3 ♖g1 55.♖f4 ♔d6 After 55...♖c1 56.♔d4 is winning as the h-pawn is lost.

56.♖xh4 ♔c5 57.♔f3 ♖f1+ 58.♔e3 ♖a1 59.♔f2 ♖a2+ 60.♔e3 ♖a3+ 61.♔e4 ♔xc4 62.♖h6 ♔c5 63.h4 ♖a1 64.h5



64...♖e1+ 65.♔f5 ♖f1+ 66.♔e6 White holds off the black king.

66...♖a1 67.♖g6 ♖a6+ 68.♔f5 ♖a5 69.h6 ♔d4+ 70.♔f6 ♖a6+ 71.♔g7 ♖a7+ 72.♔g8 ♖a8+ 73.♔f7 ♖a7+ 74.♔f6 ♖a6+ 75.♔g5 ♖a5+ 76.♔g4 ♖a1 77.♖e6 Keeping the king from approaching by taking control of the e-file.

77...♔d5 78.♖e3 ♖a8 79.♔h5 ♖a7 80.♔g5 ♔d4 81.♖h3 ♔d5

1-0

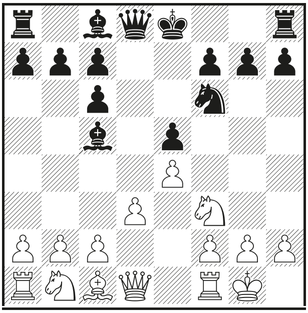
Here is another positional game from Luke McShane against Danny Gormally.

Luke McShane

Danny **Gormally** - Luke **McShane**

12th LCC English Rapid London ENG (2.2)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3 ♗c5 5.♗xc6 dxc6 6.0-0

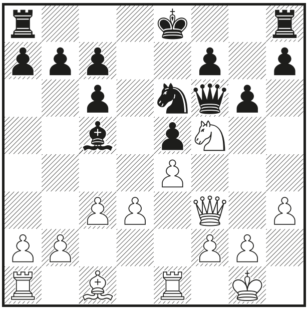


6.♘xe5 ♕d4 7.♗e3 ♕xe5 8.d4 ♕xe4 9.dxc5 ♕xg2 is winning for Black.

6...♕e7 7.♘bd2 ♗g4 8.h3 ♗h5 9.♖e1 ♘d7 10.♘f1 ♘f8 11.♘g3 ♗xf3 12.♕xf3 ♘e6 13.♘f5 ♕f6 13...♕d7 14.c3 0-0-0 15.♖d1 g6 16.♘h6 with a slight edge for White.

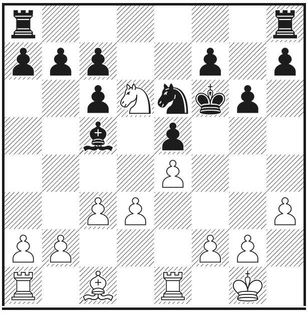
14.c3 14.♗d2 0-0-0 15.b4 ♗d6 16.a4 ♔b8 17.b5 g6 18.♘d4 ♕xf3 19.♘xf3 c5 with an edge for White.

14...g6



15.♘d6+ ♔e7 16.♕xf6+ ♔xf6

Both McShane and Jones finished on 7/9
so the winner had to be decided
in the playoff



17.♘c4 If 17.♘xb7 ♗b6 18.b4 ♖ab8 19.♘a5 ♗xa5 20.bxa5 ♖hd8 21.♖d1 c5 with strong pressure for the pawn.

17...a5 18.a4 To prevent ...b5.

18...♖hd8 19.♖d1 h5 20.h4 ♗d6 21.♗e3 c5 22.g3 ♔g7 23.♔g2 b6 24.♖f1 f5 25.♖ae1 ♖e8 26.♗c1 26.exf5 looks best.

26...f4 27.gxf4 exf4 28.♔f3 ♗e7 29.♖h1 ♖ad8 30.♔e2 f3+ 31.♔d2 31.♔xf3 ♖xd3+ 32.♔e2 ♖d7 is better.

31...♖f8 32.♖h3 ♘f4 33.♖e3 A blunder; 33.♖xf3 ♗xh4 is almost equal but Black has slightly better chances with his active play.

33...♘xh3

0-1

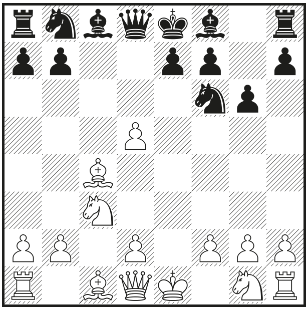
The decisive play-off game was won by Gawain Jones.

Gawain **Jones** – Luke **McShane**

12th LCC English Rapid TB London ENG (2.1)

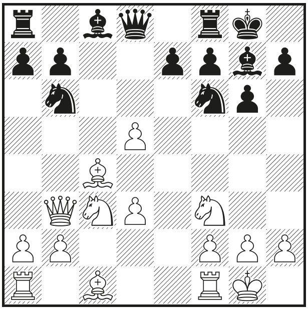
1.e4 c6 2.c4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.cxd5 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 5...♘xd5 6.♘f3 e6 7.d4 ♘c6.

6.♗c4



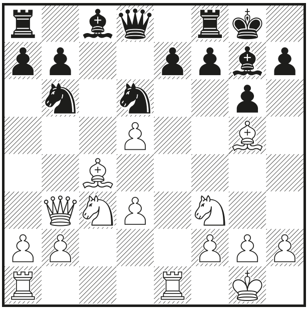
Holding onto the pawn cramps Blacks development.

6...♗g7 7.d3 ♘bd7 8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0 ♘b6 10.♕b3



The key move defending d5 again.

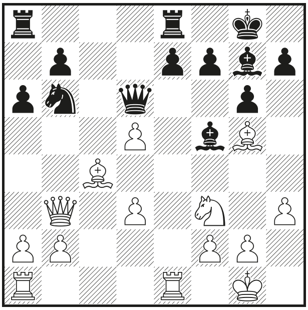
10...♘e8 11.♖e1 ♘d6 12.♗g5



Black is under pressure down the e-file.

12...♖e8 13.h3 13.♘b5 ♘xb5 14.♗xb5 ♗d7 15.♗c4 ♘c8 16.♕xb7 ♘d6 17.♕a6 ♗g4 18.♘d2 ♗xb2 19.♖ab1 White is better.

13...♗f5 14.♘b5 a6 15.♘xd6 ♕xd6

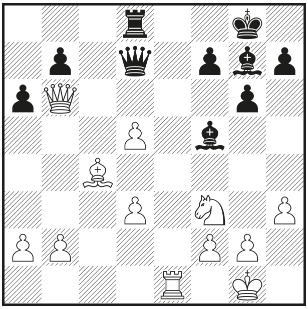


16.♖xe7 Tactics flow; the Black queen is overloaded

16...♖xe7 If 16...♘xc4 17.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 18.dxc4 ♖e2 19.♗d2 ♗e4 20.♖d1 ♕c5 21.♗e3 ♕c7 22.♘d2 ♗f5 23.♔f1 is good.

17.♗xe7 ♕xe7 18.♕xb6 White is much better now with his extra doubled pawns.

18...♖d8 19.♖e1 ♕d7



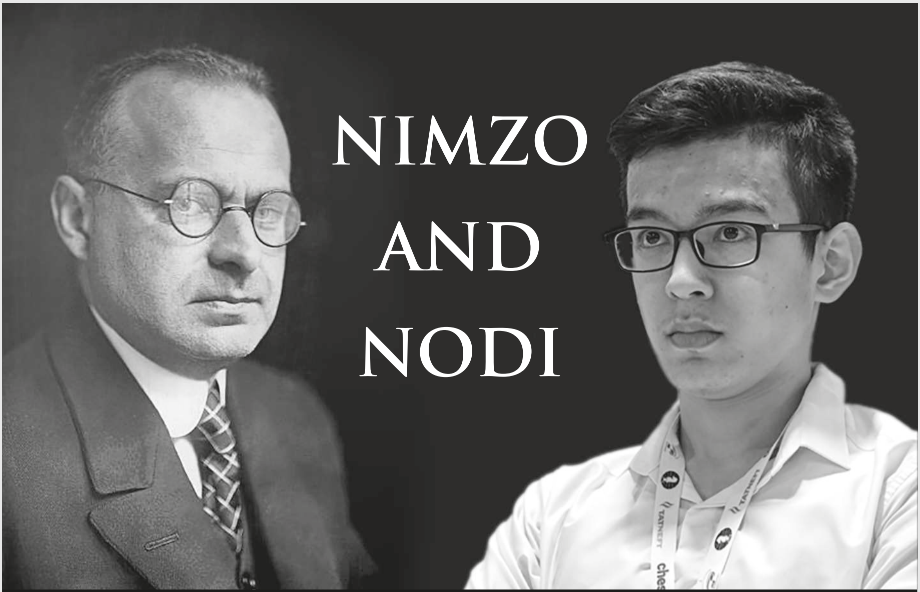
20.d6 The cold blooded 20.g4 ♗xg4 21.hxg4 ♕xg4+ 22.♔f1 ♕h3+ 23.♔e2 ♖e8+ 24.♔d2 ♗h6+ 25.♔c3 ♗g7+ 26.♔b3 ♖xe1 27.♘xe1 ♕h4 28.d6 ♕f6 29.d4 is winning for White but the game continuation should also win.

20...♗f6 21.♘e5 ♗xe5 After 21...♕xd6 22.♕xd6 ♖xd6 23.♘xf7 ♖d4 24.♘d6+ ♔f8 25.♖e8+ ♔g7 26.♖g8+ ♔h6 27.♘f7+ ♔h5 28.g4+ ♗xg4 29.hxg4+ ♖xg4+ 30.♔f1 ♗xb2 31.a4 is winning for White.

22.♖xe5 ♕xd6 If 22...♖e8 23.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 24.♕xb7 ♕e1+ 25.♔h2 ♕e5+ 26.g3 is winning.

23.♖e8+

1-0



NIMZO AND NODI

HOW NODIRBEK ABDUSATTOROV REVIVED A SYSTEM FIRST INTRODUCED, AS PART OF THE HYPERMODERN REVOLUTION, BY ARON NIMZOWITSCH IN THE 1926 DRESDEN TOURNAMENT

By Grandmaster Raymond Keene OBE
Photo: Archive and FIDE

The world rapid championships were discussed in the Editorial comment of January issue of BCM. In particular, the rise of a new star - the 17-year-old Nodirbek Abdusattorov, who took the world crown in rapid, following wins against World Champion Magnus Carlsen and erstwhile challenger Ian Nepomniachtchi.

For these games Nodirbek Abdusattorov revived a system first introduced, as part of the Hypermodern revolution, by Aron Nimzowitsch in the tournament he won at Dresden 1926, ahead of Alekhine, Rubinstein, Tartakower... Nimzo's winning score was a stunning 8.5 out of nine, one and a half points ahead of second placed Alekhine.

The revolutionary aspect of Nimzo's innovation was the voluntary giant hole, self-inflicted on d4. The e4/c4 construct was in direct contradiction to classical theory, which frowned on the creation of such gaping wounds in the pawn constellation. The point, though, was the increased dynamism which accrued to White, a trade-off of advantage and disadvantage, designed to store up energy for White.

The following game, from Dresden tournament in 1926, is a good example.

CROSSTABLE DRESDEN 1926		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	
1	**Nimzowitsch**		½	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8 ½
2	**Alekhine**	½		1	1	½	½	½	1	1	1	7
3	**Rubinstein**	0	0		½	1	1	1	1	1	1	6 ½
4	**Tartakower**	0	0	½		½	1	½	½	1	1	5
5	**Von Holzhausen**	0	½	0	½		0	1	1	0	1	4
6	**Johner**	0	½	0	0	1		0	1	0	1	3 ½
7	**Yates**	0	½	0	½	0	1		0	1	0	3
7	**Sämisch**	0	0	0	½	0	0	1		½	1	3
9	**Blümich**	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	½		0	2 ½
10	**Steiner**	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1		2

Aron **Nimzowitsch** - Friedrich **Saemisch**

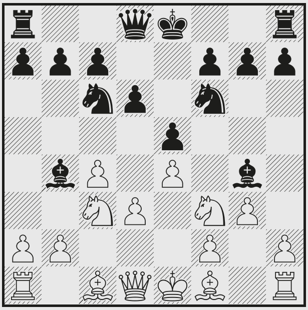
Dresden Dresden GER (9), 14.04.1926

1.c4 In another round from Dresden the sublime Akiba Rubinstein replied to Nimzo's 1.c4 with 1...c5 when there followed 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 and now, adhering to our theme, 5.e4 thus creating the forerunner of the dynamic Boleslavsky, Pelikan, Kalashnikov and Sveshnikov variations of the Sicilian Defence!

1...e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 White's next move is the key to the system which Nimzo developed and launched in the Dresden event. By committing to both e4 and c4, White leaves a giant hole on d4. In exchange, White establishes an iron grip over the centre. A recent book, 'The Iron English', by Simon Williams and Richard Palliser, extols the virtues of this structure. Amongst epigoni of the Nimzo method, the most illustrious was Mikhail Botvinnik, who employed it, for example, in a classic win against Paul Keres from 1966. Botvinnik started with 4.g3 when there followed: 4...♗c5 5.♘xe5 ♗xf2+ 6.♔xf2 ♘xe5 7.e4. This advance sets the seal on the e4/c4 central clamp. An interesting and sharp alternative is the gambit 7.d4 ♘xc4 8.e4.

4.e4 ♗b4 5.d3 d6 Here in Abdusattorov v Nepomniachtchi from Warsaw, the 17-year-old prodigy varied with 6.h3 which prevents the adventure launched by Mieses as seen in the next note. The game continued 6.h3 a5 7.♗e2 ♗c5 8.O-O h6 9.♗e3 ♗xe3 10.fxe3 with future f-file potential for White. In Abdusattorov's win v Carlsen, he varied again with 6.a3 The game continued 6...♗c5 7.b4 ♗b6 8.♘a4 ♗g4 9.♘xb6 axb6 10.♗b2 ♗xf3 11.♕xf3 when White's bishop pair and, once again, leverage prospects based on f4, gave White a clear edge.

6.g3 ♗g4



More bucolic is the (backfired) lunge at f2 with 6...♗c5 as arose in Nimzowitsch v Mieses also from Dresden 1926. After 7.♗g2 ♘g4 8.0-0 f5 9.♘d5 h6 10.exf5 ♗xf5 11.♘h4 the break f4 is in the air and White stands well.

7.♗e2 This is not as inconsistent as it may appear, for g3 was primarily intended to cover a knight move to h4 and on the other hand, ♗g2 would permit ...♘d4.

7...h6 8.♗e3 ♗xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♕d7 10.♕c2 White realizes that the mobility of his centre pawns is restricted, as d4 and still more so d5, would paralyse him on account of the weakness of c5. Therefore, he seeks to adapt the movement of his pieces to his modest circumstances in space. In this sense he could also have played 10.♘d2 (to effect a strategic retreat with f3) e.g. 10.♘d2 ♗xe2 11.♕xe2 ♘g4 12.f3 ♘xe3 13.♕xe3 O-O 14.O-O with an approximately even position. On the other hand 10.♕d2 must be looked upon as a misuse of the modest space available, for that square should remain open and the queen, in any event, would be better placed at c2 with an eye on a4 and the eventual threat of ...d5 in view. After 10.♕d2 we recommend 10...♘a5 followed by ...O-O then ...♖fe8, ...c6, and ...d5, when Black has the better position.

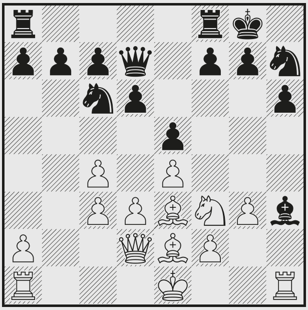
10...0-0 Here too we should prefer 10...♘a5 and if 11.d4? then ♘xc4.

11.♕d2 Now in order, as Black's castled position is in jeopardy.

11...♘h7 In order to play ...f5, but this proves impractical, and the only result is a decentralised knight on h7.

12.h3 ♘h4 would also have been sufficient.

12...♗xh3



This loses a piece. Black had only reckoned with 13.♗xh6 which by the way, would also have been strong, e.g. 13.♗xh6 ♗g2 14.♖h2 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 gxh6 16.♕xh6 f6 17.♗g4. Now comes one of those famous Nimzo retreats, such as his ♘h1 against Rubinstein, as noted above, also from Dresden.

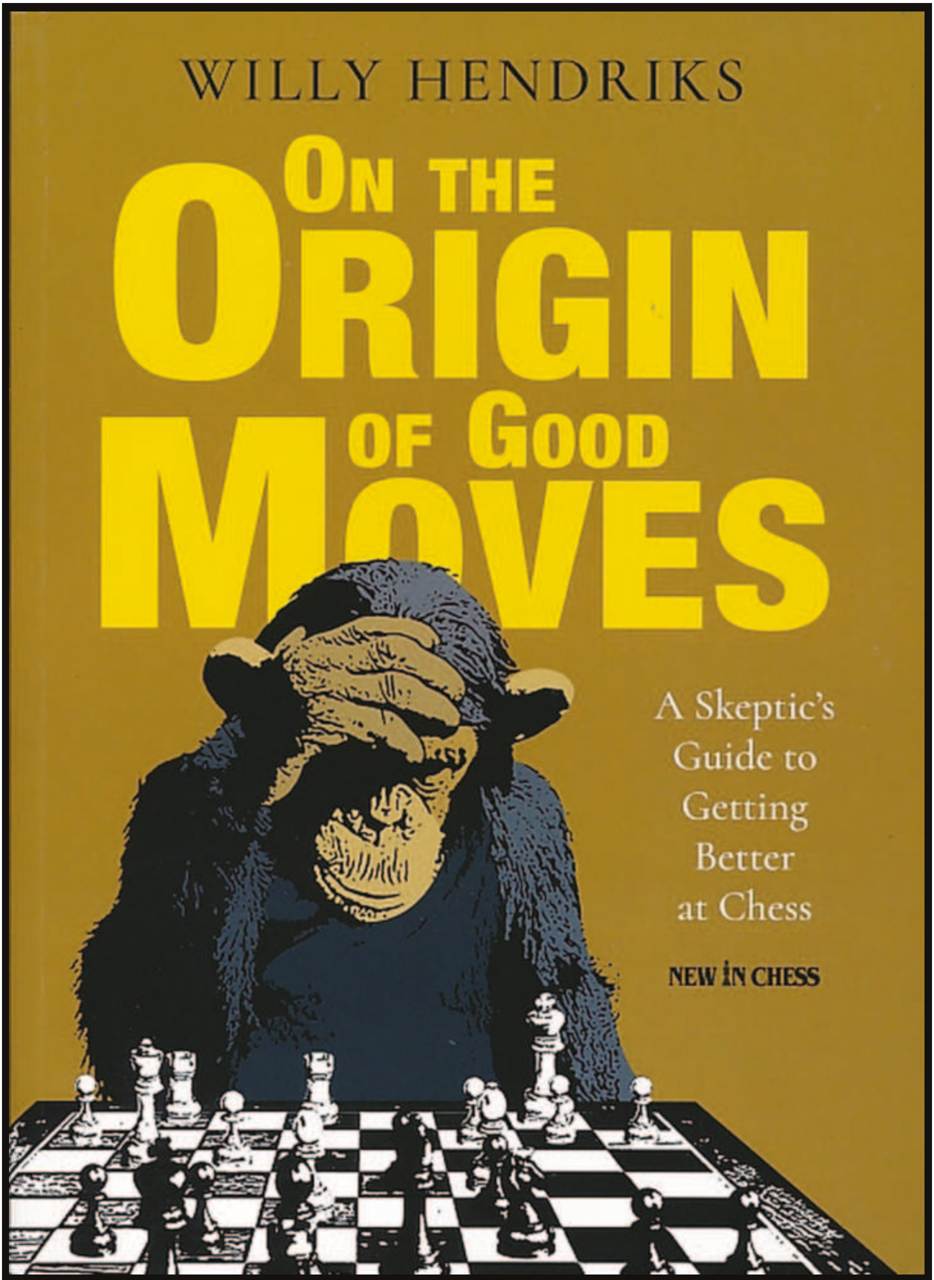
13.♘g1 ♗g4 14.f3 ♗e6 15.d4 Black cannot save the piece.

15...exd4 16.cxd4 d5 17.cxd5 ♗xd5 18.exd5 ♕xd5 19.♖d1 ♖fe8 20.♔f2 ♘f6 The decentralised knight returns in sackcloth and ashes.

21.♖h4 ♘e7 22.♗d3 ♘f5 23.♗xf5 ♕xf5 24.♔g2 ♖e7 25.♗f2 ♖ae8 26.♖f4 ♕g6 27.d5 ♖e5 If 27...♖d7 28 ♕a5.

28.♖d4 ♖d8 29.♕a5 ♘h5 30.♕xc7 ♖de8 31.d6

1-0


WILLY HENDRIKS
ON THE ORIGIN OF GOOD MOVES
A Skeptic's Guide to Getting Better at Chess
NEW IN CHESS

A REVIEW OF "ON THE ORIGIN OF GOOD MOVES", BY WILLY HENDRIKS, NEW IN CHESS, 2020

By Peter O'Brien

THE CALCULUS OF IMPROVEMENT

Hendrik's book is nothing less than a (re)evaluation of the development of chess over time, of the circumstances shaping diffusion of chess knowledge

As you can see, the front cover of this book shows a monkey, meditating deeply over a chessboard. Coupled with the title phrase 'On the Origin', the reader is immediately in Darwin's world. We do not know how long our illustrious ancestor has been cogitating – minutes, maybe even an hour. But if we start to reflect, we quickly realise that we have been wondering about our precise links with the primate for far longer than he has been puzzling over his next move. We recall that the intrepid English clergyman advanced a theory of development hinging on the word 'evolution'. Change for humans had, according to the theory, proceeded by increments. Unlike ideas about the universe, whether inspired by religious views or physical 'big bangs', human beings have come to be what we are, not by quantum leaps, but by slow modifications determined by all kinds of factors, including climate change, which weighs ever heavier today.

Willy Hendriks, a professional chess trainer – and unquestionably a very good one, judging by the contents of this outstanding book – seeks to do several things at the same time. He teaches, through the simple but effective device of inviting readers to assess positions, often drawn from different stages in the same game. Now the device is not novel. But when, as at the beginning of the very first chapter, Hendriks gives a complete game and then asks us when we think it might have been played, and by whom, we are in very different territory. Almost automatically, our mental response is to slightly modify the question and say to ourselves 'how modern is this?'.

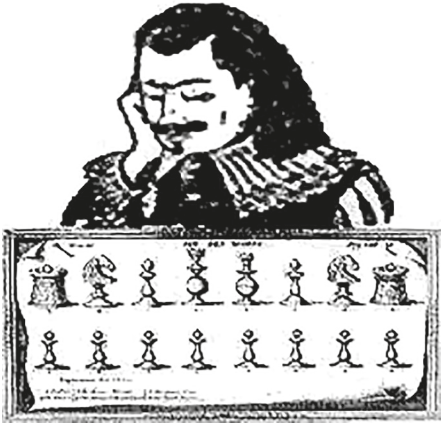
This exercise took me straight back to my early education as a professional economist. I was doing a doctoral exam on the history of economic thought in a course taught by a Nobel award-winning economist. To add spice, in the summer preceding term time at the world-famous university, I had acted as a research assistant to the same professor. My task had been to examine all articles published in five top economic journals and assess how techniques of economic analysis had evolved over 80 years (the sample set contained 1726 articles). So, I went into the exam armed not only with what had been splendidly taught in the course but additionally with the benefit of doing first-hand research into something that, at the time, nobody else had been given the opportunity to carry out. The exam consisted of studying four quotations about economics. I, and my fellow students, had to write four corresponding essays indicating approximately when we believed these remarks may have been made, and by whom. The test is, I can assure you, an excellent one. For it throws intense light on lacunae in knowledge and simultaneously forces us to consider what we believe we know about key issues (in chess and in economics).

The book is therefore nothing less than a (re)evaluation of the development of chess over time, of the circumstances shaping diffusion of chess knowledge, of the fierce disputes among those purporting to create and codify knowledge, and of received orthodoxy on these interrelated subjects. It starts with Italy and Giachonino Greco. The southern Italian, probably calabrese, lived from around 1600 to 1640. His life, therefore, coincided with the late renaissance, a time when Galileo

Galilei, Caravaggio, Artemisia Gentileschi and Giordano Bruno were all, in their distinct ways, revolutionizing ideas and practices on the peninsula (and, over time, in the world). Greco was a practitioner and communicator who, as Hendriks convincingly argues, made a major and not sufficiently recognised contribution to chess evolution. He travelled to the nearby European countries (which is where chess at that time was mostly found), and played and recorded his games. Indeed, he penned at least four manuscripts on the game.

Since I write this review while in Italy, I checked with my local (and well informed) specialist librarian if there were any copies, facsimile or otherwise, I could obtain of these works. He informed me that, short of the originals in the National Library in Rome, the answer was – 'no'. In any field, traceability is of the essence. Luckily, via various sources, we do have access to a number of the games played by Greco and Hendriks makes splendid use of these. The message is clear. Not only do they contain the first practical demonstrations of a wide range of tactical ideas central to successful chess playing, but they also initiate explorations of concepts that have had a central place in theorising about the game. If we believe that a conceptual frame did not come till the late 19th century, then we should rethink history.

About a century after Greco, Italy struck again. In the beautiful north Italian city, well known today as the home of Luciano Pavarotti, namely Modena, a trio of remarkable gentlemen made another major step in thinking about the game. Ercole del Rio, Giambattista Lolli and Domenico Ponziani likewise published innovative material. This time, however, it was by no means confined to actual play. The Modenese school also focused on what we now call endgame studies and endgame theory. Until then, and as far as we can tell, the vast majority of actual games had tended to finish before positions with sparse material had been reached. So little, save for the Saavedra insight on rook endings, was available in terms of how such situations should be handled. Modena took us a step further. Once again, my librarian friend sadly told me that the work of these innovators could only be found in the remaining originals in Rome.



HENDRIKS ARGUES THAT THE CONTRIBUTION TO CHESS GIVEN BY GRECO (PICTURED) IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY RECOGNISED

The fragmentary nature of material prior to the 18th century meant that, as soon as someone came along who was simultaneously superior to others in over the board play and was ready to assert that his thinking was pioneering, then he could stake a claim to being Mister Chess. Such a person was Francois Andre Danican Philidor, equally celebrated as a musical composer (where there was no shortage of world-class competition in the 18th century). Philidor's profession as a musician no doubt sensitised him to issues of intellectual property. Copyright over musical scores was a hotly contested issue in the latter part of the century. Its existence in legal terms meant that classical music was an area where false claims would be exposed very quickly. Chess, however, was far less codified. Philidor's sundry assertions, especially with regard to pawn play, thus came under less scrutiny and allowed him room to announce originality where in fact it did not exist. None of this implies that the Frenchman was anything less than an outstanding figure in the pantheon of the game. It does, however, compel a fresh look at what was actually happening.

Following Philidor, and coming into the 18th century, Modena made a second major step. Francesco Discart (born 1819), and at least 15 others, produced and recorded a whole host of games full of rich ideas. Moreover, they also created a large number of what we today call 'studies'. Moves can come from various sources and probably many players would agree that quite a few of the most exciting inspirations emerge in studies and problems. Discart and his colleagues took us several strides forward. Their work was published principally in Austria, in a regular journal entitled *'An der schoenen blauen Donau'* (it's not only the title of a great waltz). It seems reasonable to speculate that the diffusion through the German language facilitated the spread of good moves.

I return to the history of economic thought. The late 18th century saw the publication of Adam Smith's 'The Wealth of Nations', major disputes around the doctrines of mercantilism and international trade, the policy programs of Colbert, and various other controversies. As with chess, plenty had in fact happened far earlier. The creation of joint stock companies can be traced back at least to the formation of the notorious East India Company in London around 1600. Its formation had in turn been driven by the highly successful VOC in Amsterdam. A century or so later, in the twilight years of Le Roi Soleil, the Scottish financier John Law had created in France one of the outstanding speculative bubbles, that of the South Sea. What was 'missing', so to speak, was a major work that pulled together at least some of the ideas. Smith's famous volume partially did this. I say partially because, in fact, he was focusing on a novel aspect of economic growth, to wit how to raise productivity in the new industrial age. Since the great Scot also produced another astonishing magnum opus (though it was not completed before his death) called 'The Theory of Moral Sentiments' which emphasized the hazards of the market, he can thus lay claim to having made a truly gigantic leap in economic understanding.

The parallels, and lessons to be learnt, from these earlier phases of development of both chess and economics seem clear enough. Different people in different locations were experimenting with their own ideas. Limited practical competition (especially in chess) and constrained diffusion meant that these ideas were not receiving the scrutiny they deserved and required. In both fields, we had to wait until the 19th century, and especially its latter half, before real codification and the 'creation of an orthodoxy' occurred. And once codification and orthodoxy were there, doctrinal and personal (even political) disputes exploded on a huge scale. For sure the scope for disputes in economics is far greater than in chess. The former has an amoeba-like character, where more and more areas of human activity are subjected to economic analysis, and views about how to create more wealth and power are shaped by myriad factors. Ideologies and prejudices are created and serve as barriers to increased knowledge. But chess does not fall that far short. For at least the past 150 years, plenty of individuals and systems have set themselves up as influencers or indeed as 'sole authorities'. To be successful in that self-laudatory role, you not only require a plausible message but you also have to be sharp in denigrating your rivals. The latter can be predecessors and/or contemporaries. Whoever they were/are, give them short shrift.

The bashing of rivals became a full-time sport from the time of Steinitz onwards. Within the German-speaking world, Tarrasch and Lasker published works that made no bones about severe criticism of Steinitz. Since the latter had, in his written material, lambasted many players contemporary with him, the 20th century dawned with an abundance of simplified descriptions, not to say gross misrepresentations, of splendid players of the recent and not so recent past. I personally believe 64 square strife became still worse in the aftermath of the 1914-1918 conflicts. Nimzowitsch weighed in with the very title of his major treatise, namely 'My System' (thereby inviting spoofs, such as that by Hans Kmoch, which carried the system to the absurd). The artistic movements which exploded in the 1920s and after had a powerful influence on chess thinking, again in the direction of upending ideas. The Soviet revolution sought to impose its orthodoxy, implicitly devaluing predecessors. Yet in the quasi-religious fervour then reigning in almost every domain, the terrible mistake was the unthinking acceptance of the caricature of chess history and individual players/theorists who had accomplished so much in earlier centuries. As Hendriks forcefully shows, that non-critical picture has prevailed until the present, as quotations from even Kasparov's monumental series 'My Great Predecessors' illustrate perfectly.

Hendriks demonstrates these points quite beautifully, using figures and arguments with immense dexterity. For instance, he notes that the world's chess playing community in the mid-19th century was probably no more than 0.1% of what it is today. Correspondingly, current players not only can, should they so wish, play competitive games at several time rates 24/7, but they can also consult on their own computers databases of games running into many millions. Innovative ideas spread literally in nano-seconds and nobody can claim protection for their ideas. In economic terms, chess is as good a proximation as you'll get to that mythical creature, 'the perfect market'.

Hendriks underlines that chess, like economics, is today rife with textbooks produced in ever-increasing numbers and subject to ever more 'new editions'. Big data, which of course provides the opportunity to focus with the finest of microscopes, is now the measure for assessment in both chess and economics. Performance improvement is absolutely a realistic goal for all. We know what to do and we know how to do it. What's more, chess is now pretty successful in linking together Artificial Intelligence with actual play. Matthew Sadler has recently emphasized this with the follow-up volume of the outstanding work on Alpha Zero, this time in effect providing us with a roadmap for how to use Alpha (and other related AI) to improve our ability to play.

I have titled this review with a focus on improvement. That is what we should all be striving for, and it is what Hendriks is doing as a profession. But it is the 'how to get there?' which is tough to nail down. Quantum leaping certainly sounds like a terrific exercise and no doubt exerts its seductive power. Yet the reality is often far more mundane.

IM Willy Hendriks

I'll cheat, one last time, by again referring to the economics of progress. I had started working on technological change and made the error of thinking only in terms of the quantum leapers. Then I came across an article written by two splendid thinkers who described localised technological change. The message was so clear. What actually makes the cumulative difference and drives growth is the myriad small developments made by people seeking to improve what they produce or the services they provide. And those improvements come primarily because of the familiarity these people have with their craft. Not only do they 'learn by doing' (thank you, Mr Smith) but they also improve by learning. It's closer to calculus, a continuous shift, than to discrete movement. Either way, that's enough economics for one short article. So now I'll go off and follow Willy Hendriks' sage and convincing advice, starting of course by brushing up my Greco.

A UKRAINIAN VICTORY IN SLOVENIA

NOT THE BEST PERFORMANCE OF BRITISH CHESS

By IM Shaun Taulbut; Photo: ECU Press

This championship was held in Slovenia with Ukraine winning on a tie break from France, and with Poland 3rd while Russia were in 6th place. This was the first European team victory for Ukraine.

This event was fiercely contested, with Ukraine's Andrei Volokitin scored 6/8 for a rating performance of 2824. The best performance was Alireza Firouzja, now living in France, with 8/9, a remarkable tournament rating of 3015. Spain were 4th, with Alexei Shirov scoring well on top board.

The England team of M. Adams, L. McShane, G. Jones, D. Howell and R. Haria finished 13th; Gawain Jones scored 5.5/7 but the other team members were not at their best. Sadly, the bottom three teams all came from the British Isles: Ireland were 37th, Scotland were 38th and Wales 39th. Young Frederick Gordon was the most successful player for Scotland.

This edition of the European championship will not be a very memorable one if we consider the performance of the teams from England, Scotland and Wales. While the English team was one of the top seeds, ranked 5th in the rating list, having won just three matches, losing two and drawing four.

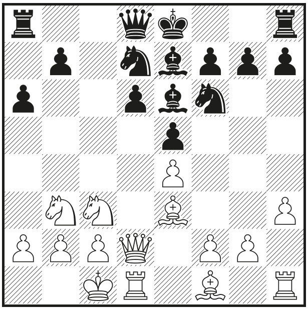
We start with a brilliant win by Alireza Firouzja who played this tournament just after his spectacular victory at the Grand Swiss in Riga (see the report about the event in this issue of BCM).

Alireza **Firouzja** – Mustafa **Yilmaz**

23rd European Teams Terme Catez SLO (4.5)

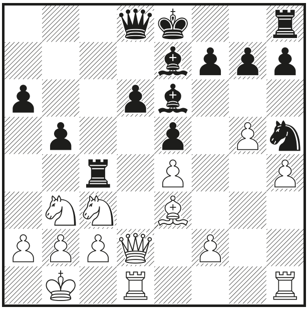
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e3 e5 7.♘b3 ♗e6 8.♕d2 ♘bd7 8...♗e7 9.f3 is standard; the pawn sacrifice 8...♘g4 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♗xe7 ♕xe7 11.f3 ♘f6 12.0-0-0 ♘c6 13.♕xd6 ♕xd6 14.♖xd6 ♔e7 15.♖d1 ♗xb3 16.axb3 ♖ac8 17.g3 is better for White.

9.0-0-0 ♗e7 10.h3



White normally plays f3 to stop the knight from coming to g4; this is a different treatment; Black continues with normal play on the queenside.

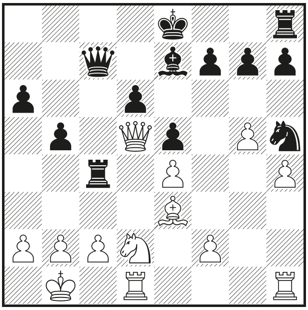
10...b5 11.g4 ♖c8 12.♔b1 ♘b6 13.g5 ♘h5 14.h4 ♘c4 15.♗xc4 ♖xc4



Black has the two bishops but is slightly behind in development; he should be all right in this position.

16.♘d5 ♗xd5 After the critical 16...♖xe4 17.♘xe7 ♔xe7 18.♘c5 ♖c4 19.♘xa6 ♗g4 20.♘b4 ♗xd1 21.♖xd1 White has compensation for the exchange.

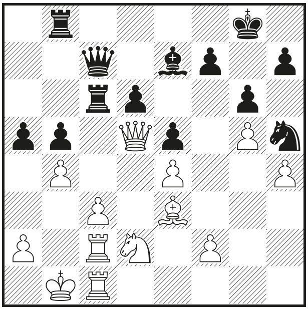
17.♕xd5 ♕c7 18.♘d2



A surprise, offering the c-pawn, but if Black captures White gains control of the c-file.

18...♖c6 After the pawn capture 18...♖xc2 19.♖c1 ♖xc1+ 20.♖xc1 ♕d7 21.♘f3 White is much better because, if 21...0-0 22.♘xe5 ♕e6, 23.♘c6 is very strong.

19.♖c1 0-0 20.c3 g6 21.♖c2 ♖b8 22.♖hc1 a5 23.b4



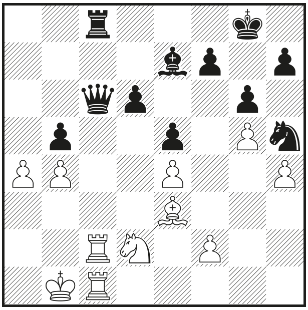
A surprising move; White advances the pawn in front of his king but aims to bring his rooks into play.

23...♖c8 24.a4 24.♕xb5 ♖b8 25.♕a4 is strong.

Alireza Firouzja had a stunning tournament performance – 3015!

24...axb4 A mistake, allowing White a simplifying combination.

25.♕xc6 ♕xc6 26.cxb4



Exchanges are now forced.

26...♕xc2+ 27.♖xc2 ♖b8 If 27...♖xc2 28.♔xc2 bxa4 29.b5, the advance of the b-pawn is decisive and Black will have to give up his bishop to stop the pawn - eg 29...♗d8 30.b6.

28.a5 ♘f4 29.♖c7 ♗d8 30.♖d7 ♘d3 31.a6 ♘xb4 32.a7 ♖a8 33.♖xd6 ♗c7 34.♖d7 ♘a6 35.♖d5 ♗a5 36.♘b3 Black will lose the b-pawn and the e-pawn and his pieces are tied down to blocking the White a-pawn.

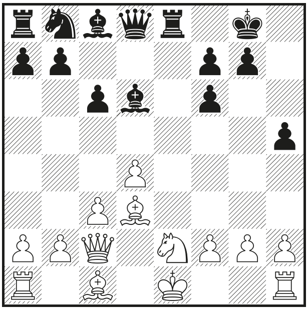
1-0

Welsh top Board Grzegorz Tozcek had to face Anish Giri in Round Two.

Grzegorz **Toczek** – Anish **Giri**

23rd European Teams Terme Catez SLO (2.10)

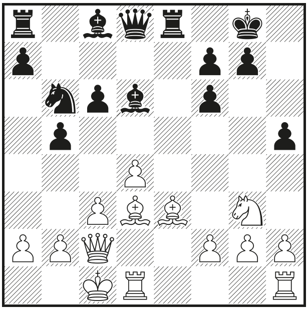
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘f6 5.♘xf6+ exf6 6.c3 ♗d6 7.♗d3 0-0 8.♕c2 ♖e8+ 9.♘e2 h5



Provocative: aiming to play ...h4.

10.♗e3 ♘d7 11.0-0-0 b5 12.♘g3 12.d5 gives White good chances of disrupting the black position by switching plans. Black cannot defend h5 with ...g6 because White would capture on g6 with the bishop, so Giri sacrifices the pawn.

12...♘b6



13.♔b1 Critical is 13.♘xh5 ♗g4 14.♗e2 ♗xe2 15.♕xe2 g6 16.♘g3 f5 17.♕f3 ♘d5 18.♗d2 ♕h4 when Black has compensation for the pawn. Now Black has strong play.

13...♘d5 14.♗c1 ♖b8 15.♖de1 If White captures 15.♘xh5 b4 16.c4 b3 17.axb3 ♘b4 18.♕c3 ♕a5 is winning for Black.

15...b4 16.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 17.♘e4 ♗c7 18.♖e1 ♕d8 19.♕e2 bxc3 20.♕xh5 cxb2 21.♗d2 If 21.♗xb2 g6 22.♕h6 ♗f5 is winning for Black.

21...g6 22.♕f3 ♗a5 23.♗c2 ♗xd2 24.♘xd2 ♕a5 25.♖e8+ ♔g7 26.♘b3 ♕a3 White has no defence to the threats including ...♘b4.

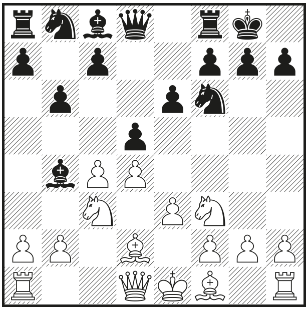
0-1

Russia, surprisingly, did not win a medal. They were not at their best but came a respectable sixth including the following win:

Vojtech **Plat** – Andrey **Esipenko**

23rd European Teams Terme Catez SLO (2.1)

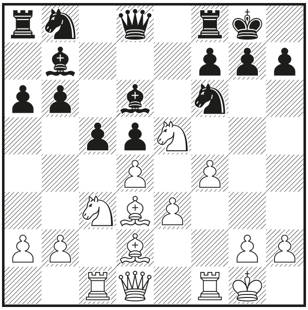
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 d5 5.e3 0-0 6.♗d2 b6



Black fianchettoes the queen's bishop, holding the centre: a typical plan.

7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗d3 ♗b7 9.♖c1 a6 10.0-0 ♗d6 Retaining the king's bishop for the moment.

11.♘e5 c5 12.f4



The knight has a strong outpost on e5 so White has a slight advantage, but Black plays strongly.

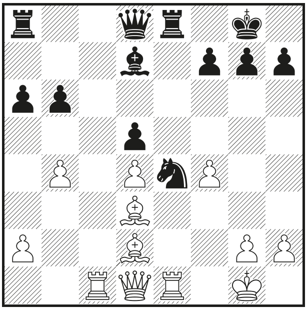
12...♘c6 13.♗e1 cxd4 14.♘xc6 ♗xc6 15.♘e2 ♗d7 16.♘xd4 The knight has a good position but the pawn on e3 is weak so this position is almost equal. Black plays to exchange off the good knight.

THE WOMEN'S SECTION:
RUSSIA WINS ANOTHER GOLD

The Russian team had a very confident performance in Slovenia, winning all nine matches and securing the gold medal with a round to spare. This is Russia's seventh gold and altogether 10th medal in the women's section of European team championships.

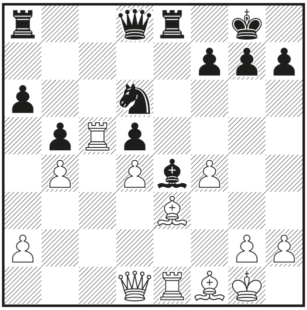
Georgia was second and Azerbaijan came in third.

16...♖e8 17.♗d2 ♗c5 18.♖e1 ♘e4 19.b4 ♗xd4 20.exd4

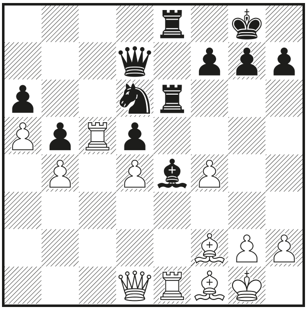


Black has control over the light squares and plays to bring all of his pieces to the kingside.

20...♗f5 21.♗f1 b5 22.♗e3 ♘d6 23.♖c5 ♗e4



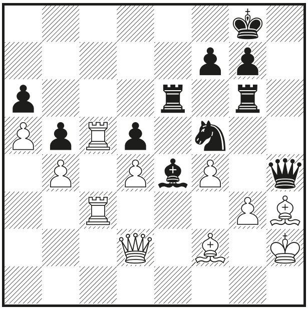
24.a4 ♕d7 25.a5 ♖e6 26.♗f2 ♖ae8



Black moves his rooks over to the kingside via the e-file.

27.♗g3 ♘f5 28.♕d2 h5 29.♖ec1 h4 30.♗f2 ♖g6 31.♖1c3 ♕e6 32.♕e2 ♕d6 33.♕d2 ♖ee6 34.g3 If 34.♖c8+ ♔h7 35.♖a8 ♖g4 36.♖cc8 ♔g6 with strong play.

34...hxg3 35.hxg3 ♕e7 36.♗h3 ♕h4 37.♔h2



If 37.♗xf5 ♕h1# or 37. ♗g2 ♘xg3 wins.

37...♕xh3+ 38.♔xh3 ♖h6+ 39.♔g4 ♖eg6#

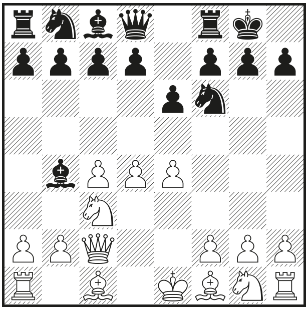
0-1

England did not fire on all cylinders; here, however, is a good win by David Howell.

David **Howell** – Giga **Quparadze**

23rd European Teams Terme Catez SLO (2.11)

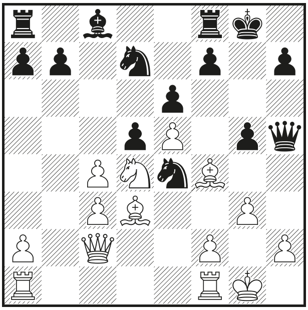
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.e4



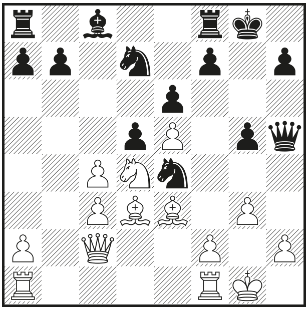
5...d5 6.e5 White has a big space advantage.

6...♘e4 7.♗d3 c5 8.♘f3 cxd4 9.♘xd4 ♘d7 10.♗f4 ♕h4 11.g3 ♕h5 White is slightly better.

12.0-0 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 g5



14.♗e3

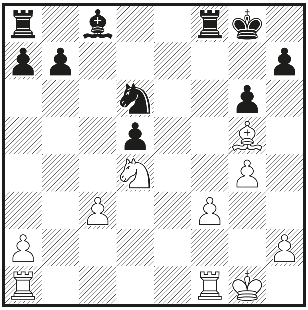


Not the best; 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♗xe4 dxe4 *(15...gxf4 16.♗f3 ♕xe5 17.♖ae1 ♕f6 18.♗xd5 with a slightly better position for White)* 16.e6 fxe6 *(16...gxf4 17.exd7 ♗xd7 18.♕xe4 fxg3 19.fxg3 with an advantage for White)* 17.♗d6 ♖f7 18.♕xe4 ♘f6 19.♕h1 with White being slightly better.

14...♘xe5 15.cxd5 exd5 16.f3 ♘xd3 16...♘c5 looks best, eg 17.♗e2 ♘c4 18.♗f2 ♖e8 with counterplay.

17.♕xd3 ♘d6 18.g4 ♕g6 18...♕h6 is better here.

19.♕xg6+ fxg6 20.♗xg5



Material is level but White has a number of positional advantages and complete control of the dark squares.

20...♖e8 21.♗f4 ♖d8 21...♘c4 22.♘b5 ♖f8 23.♗h6 ♖f7 24.♖ae1 ♗d7 25.♘c7 ♖c8 26.♘xd5 is strong for White.

22.♖fe1 ♘f7 22...♔f7 23.♗g5 ♖e8 24.♖xe8 ♘xe8 25.♖e1 ♘f6 26.♘b5 wins for White.

23.♖e7 ♔f8 24.♖c7 ♖e8 25.a4 ♖e7 26.♘b5 ♗e6 26...♗d7 27.♗c1 ♔e8 28.♗a3 ♖e5 29.♖xb7 is winning for White.

27.♖xe7 ♔xe7 28.♖e1 ♘d8 29.♗g5+ ♔d7 30.♘d4 The threat of ♗xd8, followed by ♘xe6, forces the black bishop to retreat and then White invades on e7 winning quickly.

1-0

23rd European Team Chess Championship 2021

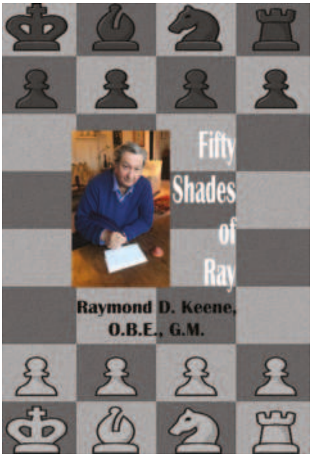
European Chess Union

Šahovska zveza Slovenije
Slovenian Chess Federation

23RD EUROPEAN TEAMS TERME CATEZ SLO THU 11TH NOV 2021 - SUN 21ST NOV 2021 LEADING FINAL ROUND 9 STANDINGS:

	SNo	Team	Gms	+	-	=	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	7	Ukraine	9	5	0	4	14	212.5	21.5
2	3	France	9	7	2	0	14	207.5	21.5
3	4	Poland	9	5	1	3	13	192.5	22.5
4	8	Spain	9	4	0	5	12	190.0	20.0
5	2	Azerbaijan	9	4	1	4	12	224.0	21.5
6	1	Russia	9	5	2	2	12	2065	20.5
7	11	Armenia	9	4	1	4	12	206.0	21.0
8	13	Serbia	9	6		0	12	160.5	20.0
9	6	Netherlands	9	4	2	3	11	175.5	20.5
10	9	Germany	9	5	3	1	11	167.0	21.0
11	25	Georgia	9	4	3	2	10	162.5	18.0
12	15	Israel	9	3	2	4	10	158.5	20.0
13	5	England	9	3	2	4	10	154.5	19.0
14	20	Greece	9	5	4	0	10	152.0	19.5
15	14	Croatia	9	3	2	4	10	148.5	19.0

Hardinge Simpole



is delighted to announce
the publication of

Fifty Shades
of Ray

Chess in the year of the
Coronavirus Pandemic

Raymond D. Keene

With an Introduction
by CJ de Mooi

QUOTES AND QUERIES

Remembering
JONATHAN PENROSE

By Alan Smith

6209 **Jonathan Penrose** (7th October 1933 - 30th November 2021) was the best British player for over a decade, in the period of 1957 - 1969. In the tradition of H. E. Atkins, he was an amateur player. London senior champion at 15, he defeated Bogoljubow and Tartakower at Southsea 1950, and tied for third place, winning the title of SCCU champion in the process. Later that year he tied for third place in the British Championship at Buxton. His six wins included one against the new champion Reginald Broadbent.

Penrose was selected to play board two at the Helsinki Olympiad and distinguished himself by making the best score of the team +6= 5-2.

I have chosen two less well-known games to illustrate the strength of his play. The first game helped Penrose to first place in an eight-player tournament, where the opposition included five national champions.

Jonathan **Penrose** - Norman **Macleod**

Glasgow, 1953

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0–0 ♗e7 6.♘c3 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.♘d5 ♘a5 9.♘xe7 ♕xe7 10.d4 ♘xb3 10...♗b7 is stronger.

11.axb3 h6 11...♗b7 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗xf6 ♕xf6 14.♖e1 0-0 15.dxe5 dxe5 16.♕d3 and white won in 40 moves Keres - Grunfeld Poznan 1943.

12.♖e1 c5 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.♘d2 ♗b7 15.♕e2 0–0 16.f3 ♘h5 17.♘f1 ♕f6 18.♕f2 ♖ac8 19.♗e3 c4 20.bxc4 ♖xc4 He needed to play 20...bxc4.

21.♗c5 ♖c8 22.b4 ♕c6 23.♘e3 ♖xc5 23...♖c3?? 24.♘d5 is even worse.

24.bxc5 ♕xc5 25.♖ed1 ♘f4 26.♖d7 ♖c7 27.♖xc7 ♕xc7 28.♕d2 ♕c5 29.♔h1 b4 30.♘f5 a5 31.♕d8+ ♔h7 32.♘e7 h5

33.♕g8+ ♔h6 34.♘f5+ ♔g5 35.♕g7+ ♘g6 36.h4+ ♔f4 37.♕h6 #

The Times, 31st July 1953

The second game features an obscure sideline, which Penrose used to avoid Bob Wade's extensive theoretical knowledge.

Jonathan **Penrose** - Bob **Wade**

London League, 1962-1963

1.e4 c5 2.g3 d5 3.♘c3 This sets Bob Wade unusual problems.

3...♘f6 A move which allows white a small edge. Schwarz recommended 3...d4 4.♘b1 ♘c6 5.d3 e5 6.♗g2 ♗d6 7.♘e2 h5 which he felt favoured black.

4.exd5 ♘xd5 5.♗g2 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 g6 6...♘c6 7.♘e2 ♘c6 8.0-0 transposes to Keres - Foltys Salzburg 1943 which continued 8...♗e7 9.♖b1 0-0 10.c4 Black rounded up the c4 pawn, but his position on the other wing collapsed and he lost in 18 moves.

7.♘e2 ♗g7 8.0–0 0–0 9.d4 ♘c6 10.♗e3 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♗g4 12.c3 ♕d7 13.♖e1 ♘a5 14.♕c1 ♖ac8 15.♗h6 ♗xh6 15...♖fe8 was better according to Fairhurst.

16.♕xh6 ♗xe2 17.♖xe2 ♖xc3 18.♖e4 e6 18...f5 19.♖e5 threatens 20.♗d5+.

19.♖ae1 ♖d3 20.♖h4 f5 21.♖xe6 ♖d1+ 22.♗f1 ♕f7? 22...♕g7 23.♕xg7+ ♔xg7 24.♖e7+ ♖f7 25.♖xh7+ Fairhurst , black is by no means lost.

23.♕e3 ♘c6 24.d5 ♖xd5 25.♗c4 ♖d1+ 26.♔g2 ♘a5 27.♖xg6+ hxg6 28.♕h6

1–0

Glasgow Herald, 14th January 1963

Tal and Penrose at the Leipzig Olympiad in 1960

6213 A Penrose era? Well, Penrose played in thirteen consecutive British championships 1957 to 1969. He won in 1958 and 1959 after playoffs. He won four more titles 1960-1963 but lost in round one in 1964 and never came close to matching Henry Atkins record of seven consecutive wins (1905 to 1911). He was second equal the following year, then won four more titles from 1966 to 1969.

Over the course of these fifteen events, Penrose lost six games out of 151 contested. Admirable consistency.

6214 Penrose did not play a lot of international chess. He did record wins against two world champions Euwe and Tal and he also defeated several players who played in Candidates events Filip, Larsen, Mecking, Olafsson, Panno and Portisch.

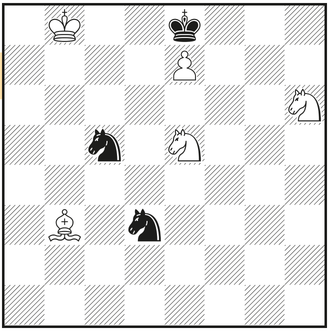
Penrose retired from competitive chess in the 1970s, replacing the over-the-board events with correspondence chess where he had much success and achieved the title of correspondence grandmaster.

It is worth noting that Jonathan Penrose comes from a family which gave great contributions to humanity not only in chess. His father, Lionel, was a professor of genetics at UCL and also composed chess studies. Jonathan's three siblings are mathematical physicist Sir Roger Penrose, who won a Nobel Prize in physics, Oliver who is a theoretical physicist and their sister Shirley who is a geneticist.

Endgame Studies

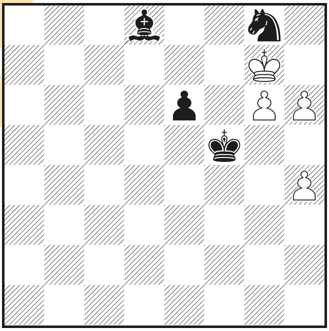
by Ian Watson
ian@irwatson.uk

1



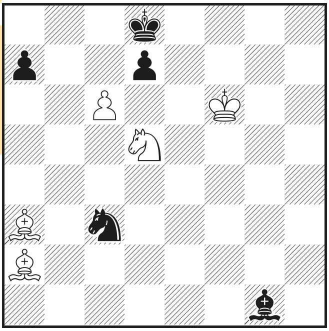
M. Schloegel & M. Minski
Swiss Open Solving Champ. 2021
WIN

2



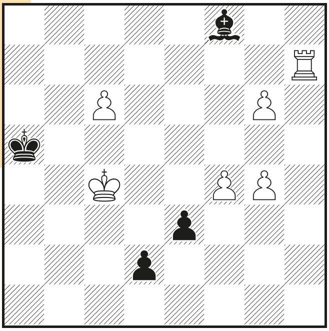
M. Matous
Sinfonie Scacchistiche 1981
WIN

3



V. Kalandadze
Akobia-60 JT 1997
WIN

4



P. Rewitz
Ostersoturneringen 1991
DRAW

February Solving Challenges

Four studies from recent solving competitions, for you to test your solving skills on.

The first two studies were set to solvers in the Open Swiss Solving Championship in November 2021. Only three of the top ten solvers got full points on both - can you? The event was won by the Russian junior solver Danila Pavlov. That was no surprise, because Pavlov had already won the World Chess Solving Championship in October. He achieved a perfect score of 90 out of 90 in the World Championship, well ahead of previous World Champions who took part in the event, and who included many-time winners Piorun and Murdzia.

The first study shows an idea that has been used by other composers, notably by Paul Michelet whose studies often appear in this column. I hope you keep your back-issues of BCM! If so, after you have solved this study, compare it with Paul's third study in the November 2018 issue; Paul combined the final idea with both under-promotion and 'Excelsiors' (White and Black pawns advancing all the way from their start squares to promotion). Schloegel and Minski have opted instead for perhaps the most economical setting of the theme.

The third and fourth studies are from the Christmas BOOM. BOOM, the British Open Online Masters, is a solving Grand Prix that has multiple events around the year. The Christmas event was won by Anatoly Mukoseev, with Nikos Sidiropoulos second and British solver David Hodge third. Most of the top solvers in the event solved both these studies correctly, so you have to too!

You can find all the Christmas BOOM problems and solutions on the www.netchex.club website. Also there you'll find new daily and monthly solving challenges.

For those of you who aren't familiar with solving event procedures: You'll need to set up these positions on a board. In solving events, you can use a chess set and you can move the pieces to try and help you solve. You solve against the clock; for these studies give yourself an average of 30 minutes for each one, so 120 minutes in total. Your solutions are marked by the competition's supervisor. Points are awarded according to how much of the composer's solution you find, with five points available for each study if you find it all. In the answers, I'll show you where the points were awarded. You need to find the composer's main line; you can also write down sidelines if you're not sure what the main line is, but only the main line moves earn points. So look for the most artistic, elegant line.

The solutions are given on page 127.

Openings for Amateurs

by Pete Tamburro; ptamburro@aol.com

Inside a Master's Head

Israel Albert Horowitz (pictured) is rightly famous for his wonderful books for the club player back in the 1940s, 50s and 60s and his editorship of the incredible Chess Review magazine. He would also tour the United States to give simultaneous exhibitions and lectures. He was very popular and much underestimated as a player. Horowitz was part of the spectacular US Olympiad teams at Prague, Warsaw and Stockholm. He had at least one win over Marshall, Dake, Fine, Denker, Reshevsky, Trifunovic, Lombardy and Robert Byrne. He drew a match with Kashdan.

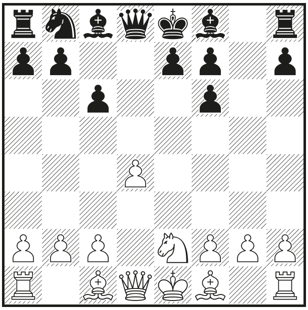
Horowitz was one of the few bright spots in the US matches' disasters with the USSR. He drew with Geller twice and beat Flohr in a great game. He annotated his game with Flohr for Chess Review. The notes were special because he invited the readers into his mind and his decision-making during the game. It was immensely helpful for the average player because you learnt concepts rather than variations.

The selected excerpts are of immense value today as well. So, forget what's trendy now and go back to 1945 and pick up some tips as though Al were going over the game at the club with you.

Israel Albert **Horowitz** - Salo **Flohr** [B16]

USSR-USA Radio Match, 1945

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘f6 5.♘xf6+ gxf6 6.♘e2



Horowitz's line of reasoning: *'Not the book move; I played the text because I did not know the book move. Starting from scratch, I was faced with the problem of finding the move with the greatest prospects. I discounted a move of the King's Bishop as I wasn't sure where the Bishop belonged - was it e2, d3 or c4? I discarded a move with the Queen's Bishop as the king-side was crying for development. Hence, the king's knight was elected to make the next move. But where to? The natural is Nf3, and while I haven't checked, I feel sure this is the book move. Yet f3 seems to be lacking in prospects. For the squares e5 and g5 are covered by Black's Pawn at f6. Consequently, I hit upon ♘e2. For at e2, the knight may go to c3, f4 or g3, any one of which may be a plausible continuation.'*

This is a great insight for amateurs to comprehend and apply. Look at what he does. He inspects all the piece moves because development is key in the opening; however, he doesn't just routinely develop a piece. He chooses by process of elimination using two criteria: he holds off developing the king bishop because he doesn't quite know where to put it. It's the old rule, advised by Purdy almost a hundred years ago: first make those moves you know you have to make. Secondly, he looks at the piece placement with respect to the strategic demands of the position. Will Black prevent the knight move to f3 from being useful on its next move? The other strategic demand is the security of his king, which becomes a key factor for both sides in deciding this game. It's hard for us to imagine a top player in the U.S. not knowing theory on move six, but that was a different era. Still, it helps us because, although amateurs today can go deeper in their book knowledge of their opening, there's still that 'ten move rule' I often talk about. After move ten or so, most amateurs find themselves in Horowitz's circumstances on move six.

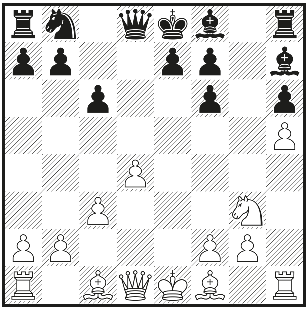
Thus, it's useful for us to remember this teaching moment from a master.

These days, 6.c3 is the most popular move with ♘f3 coming in 2nd, and Black replies to c3 with 6...♗f5.

6...♗f5 If we learn one pawn move theme in this game, it's the critical role of Black playing e5 at one point or another. Several off-beat Caro Kann lines have this consideration, along with the possible ♕a5 being involved. 6...e5 7.♗e3 ♗e6 *(7...exd4 8.♘xd4)* 8.♘g3 h5 9.dxe5 fxe5 *(9...♕xd1+ 10.♖xd1 fxe5 11.h4 ♗b4+ 12.c3 ♗e7 13.♗e2 and White's better because his coming capture of the h-pawn is more important than Black's capture of the a-pawn.)* 10.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 11.♘e4 ♘d7 12.♘g5 ♗h6 13.♘xe6+ fxe6 14.♗xh6 ♖xh6± One tiny irony in all this is that in the USSR championship semi-final in 1940, Kasparian beat Khavin with this line. So, it wasn't strictly new and was part of the Soviet chess experience, but it seems the booked-up Flohr wasn't booked up either!

7.♘g3 ♗g6 8.h4 h6 Horowitz mentions 8...h5 with the reply 9.♗e2, but making the interesting comment that it's pressure on the h-pawn, not winning it, that is important.

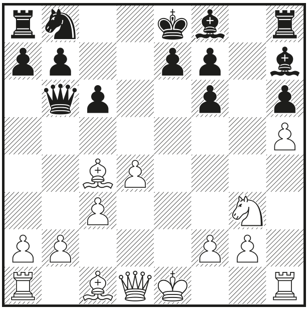
9.h5 ♗h7 10.c3



He continues with his line of reasoning based on the above: *'As yet, the final square for either of White's Bishops is not determined. But the center Pawn will require defense sooner or later. So it might as well be defended sooner.'*

10...♕b6 Black could try 10...♘d7, but one gets the idea that perhaps Flohr wanted something more double-edged. 11.♗e3 *(11.♕f3; or even 11.♗d3 ♗xd3 12.♕xd3 e6 13.♗f4 which may have been too cramped for even Flohr.)*

11.♗c4



Now, he emphasizes a general strategic consideration: *'The square for the KB is now determined. Be2 adds little to White's prospects; Bd3, offering a friendly exchange, is in violation of sound strategy: avoid exchanges when intent on attack. By elimination Bc4 is the move. But it has more than that in its favor. It bears down on Black's f7, which is always a vulnerable point.'*

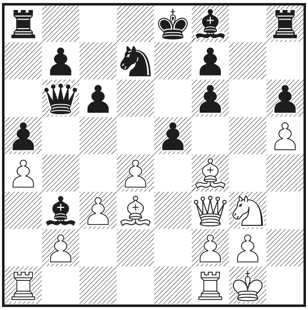
11...♘d7 12.a4 a5 13.♕f3 Horowitz a little bit later mentions 13.♕e2, which

> *Horowitz invited the readers into his mind and his decision-making during the game. It was immensely helpful for the average player because you learnt concepts rather than variations*

would be very good here as well, as it would have prevented the ♗c2-♗b3 idea Flohr tries later in order to block the queenside pawn expansion by White when Black castles queenside.

13...e6 14.0-0 He could play right away 14.♗f4.

14...♗c2 15.♗f4 ♗b3 16.♗d3 e5??



‘Completely incomprehensible.’ - Horowitz.

As a dear departed master friend of mine, Barry Spiro, would say: ‘Bonkers’. Even amateurs rarely allow the possibility of opening the centre to play when the king is still on his original square. Maybe he thought he would have time for queenside castling.

It wouldn’t have solved all his problems, but castling would have been better. There are three key possibilities after that. 16...0-0-0 17.♖fc1 *(White could play less aggressively and give Black his e5 move: 17.♘e2 ♗d5 18.♕e3 e5 19.♗g3 ♗d6 20.b4 and it’s a fight.; 17.♘e4 ♗d5 18.♕e2 f5 19.♘d2 ♖g8 20.g3 ♘f6 21.c4 ♗e4 22.♗xe4 fxe4 23.♘xe4 ♘xe4 24.♕xe4 ♕xd4 25.♖ae1 ♕xe4 26.♖xe4 ♗g7 27.b3 ♖d3 28.♖e3 and White’s a little bit better because of the three pawn islands in a K and P ending, but Black doesn’t have to cooperate.)* 17...♖g8 18.♗f1 ♗d5 19.♕e2 e5∓ A good example of how castling before e5 would have made a difference.

17.♗e3 ♗d5 Castling was at this point the lesser of evils, but Flohr is trying to exchange to reduce the forces on the board.

18.♗e4 ♕b3 19.dxe5 fxe5 20.♖ad1 ♗xe4 21.♕xe4 ♕e6 22.♖d2 ♘f6 Too late for castling: 22...0-0-0 23.♖fd1 ♗c5 24.♘f5 ♗xe3 25.♘d6+ ♔b8 26.♕xe3 f5 27.♘c4 f4 28.♕e4 ♔c7 29.♘xa5 ♘f6 30.♕b4 b6 31.♖xd8 ♖xd8 32.♖xd8 c5 33.♕c4 ♕xc4 34.♘xc4 ♔xd8 35.♘xe5 with an easily won endgame.

23.♕f3 ♖g8 24.♖fd1 ♖g4 The rook move hastens the end, but it’s not much fun after 24...e4 25.♕e2 ♗e7 26.♗xh6±.

25.♘f5 e4 26.♗b6 The harsh punishment for leaving one’s king in the centre - a nasty mate threat.

26...♖xg2+ 27.♕xg2 ♕xf5 28.♖d8+ ♖xd8 29.♖xd8+ ♔e7 The loss of the exchange for a knight and pawn is not nearly enough.

30.♕g3 ♘d7 31.♗c7 Horowtiz was dismayed to discover that the pretty rook sac only led to a draw: 31.♖xd7+ ♔xd7! *(31...♕xd7??)* 32.♕c7+ ♔e6 *(32...♔e8 33.♕d8#)* 33.♕c8+ ♔f6 34.♗d4+ ♔g5.

31...♕d5 32.c4 ♕g5 33.♕xg5+ hxg5 Flohr could have resigned here.

34.♖a8 ♔e6 35.♗xa5 f5 36.♗c3 f4 37.a5 g4 38.b4 f3 39.♗d2 ♔f7 40.♖a7 g3 41.♖xb7

1-0

I hope you enjoyed the game as much as I did when I first saw it. I’ve used it many times in chess lessons. The gxf6 is still played by players who want to play for a win and should not be underestimated; however, trying to remember Horowitz’s way of thinking about the position can only be helpful for the White side.

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

This month's originals

We have a very approachable set of originals this month. David Shire shows his customary prowess in presenting a number of plausible tries as well as the actual key: a good puzzle, quite apart from its aesthetic merits. Paul Michelet has worked on a celebrated problem from 1991 to enhance its appeal - surely castling must be involved in the solution? Finally, we have two helpmates. If you haven't solved helpmates before, Jozef's two-mover is a gentle introduction. You're looking for a collaborative BWBW# sequence, and then another such sequence when the black king is re-positioned at h4. In Michael's more complex helpmate, the diagram position yields two WBWBWBW# sequences, complementary solutions in which the white pawns play reciprocal roles.

A two-mover with interesting choices

In David's two-mover you may well be tempted to plump for 1.♔xh6, threatening 2.♖xg5, as the key. However, a neat resource is available to Black: a move to e5 will prepare to meet 2.♖xg5 by 2…♔f6 - 1…♘e5 allows a new mate, 2.♘d4, but 1…e5! does the trick. So, try 1.♖a6 or 1.♖b6, threatening 2.♗g6. Again 1…♘e5 defends the threat and again it fails to 2.♘d4. We also have 1…♘f4 2.g4. But now 1…d6, which in the diagram would have been met by 2.♗e6, is a successful defence. In which case what about 1.♖e6? This looks neat. The threat is now 2.♘d4, and 1…dxe6 is met by 2.♗g6. But when the knight goes to d4 it will no longer control g5, so 1…g4! (which in the diagram would allow mate by 2.hxg4) is the neat refutation. If the c3 bishop moves up the diagonal to h8 or g7 this is another way of threatening 2.♘d4, and we have a new mate - 1…e5 2.♖f6 - but promoting at a1 to bishop or queen refutes. So eventually we arrive at 1.♗e5. Yet again we have a different threat, 2.g4, because the bishop now controls f4, and now there are no successful defences - 1…♘xe5 2.♘d4; 1…g4 2.hxg4; 1…h5 2.♖xg5.

Castling considerations

In Paul's four-mover it turns out that no move will threaten mate in the stipulated number of moves; so we shall have to put Black in Zugzwang. If we play 0-0-0 with that in mind, we find that we are stymied by 1…d5!. So the key, preventing that move, is 1.♗d6!. This has the nice consequence that the black king's two moves lead to each of the castling moves - if 1…♔xd6 2.0-0-0+ ♔e6/e5 3.♖he1+ ♔xf6 4.♖d6; and if 1…♔xf6 2.0-0+ ♔e6 3.♖ae1+ ♔xd6 4.♖f6. By the way, the blunt try 1.b7? fails to mate in the specified timescale after 1…♔xe5.

A simple helpmate to get you started?

Jozef's helpmate encourages you to look for mating 'nests' that can be created in a short timescale. In part (a) this is achieved by 1.♗d4 ♘e7 2.♗c4 b4; in the second, the black king at h4 is mated after 1.♗g5 ♘f6 2.♗b3 g3. You will see that the composer has set things up in such a way that in both solutions the order in which the two black moves are played is forced.

A more complex helpmate

Even though White has only the two pawns to work with, Michael's helpmate will I think be found quite difficult. It may be surprising that in each solution the white pawn that moves first does so not to

(See page 89)

begin a march to promotion but instead to provide an available square for the black king (tracking its path - a nice 'follow-my-leader' effect) to take up residence in order to be mated. The other pawn then charts a route to promotion - in one case to a queen, in the other to a knight. This is how the solutions run: 1…bxa6 2.♔b5 dxc6 3.♔xa6 cxb7 4.♗b5 bxa8=♕; and 1…dxe6 2.♔d5 bxc6 3.♔xe6 c7 4.♕d5 cxd8=♘#.

SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

(See page 120)

Schloegel & Minski

1.♘g6 (1 point) **♘e5 2.♗f7+** (+1 point = 2) **♘xf7 3.♘f5 ♔d7 4.e8♕+** (+1 = 3) **♔xe8 5.♔c7** (+1 = 4) **♘e6+ 6.♔c8** (+1 = 5) and mate follows.

1.♘xd3? ♘xb3 2.♘f5 ♘d4 3.♘xd4 ♔xe7 draws, as does 1.♘c6? ♘e5.

Other White deviations from the main line are: 2.♘xe5? ♘xb3 3.♘g6 ♘d4 4.♘g8 ♘c6+ 5.♔c7 ♘xe7; 4.♘f8+? ♔e8 5.♘g6 ♔d7; 4.e8♖? ♘a6+ 5.♔a7 ♔xe8; 5.♔c8? ♘e6 zugzwang.

Matous

1.h7 (1 point) **♗f6+ 2.♔f8** (+1 point = 2) **♘e7 3.g7 ♘g6+ 4.♔f7** (+1 = 3) **♘h8+5.♔g8 ♔g6 6.h5+** (+1 = 4) **6…♔h6 7.gxh8♗** (+1 = 5) wins.

Not 1.h5? ♘f6 2.♔f7 ♔g5 3.h7 ♘xh7 4.gxh7 ♗f6 draws.

Alternatives in the main line include: 2.♔f7? ♘h6+; 2.♔xg8? ♔xg6; 4.♔g8? ♔g4 5.♔f7 ♗xg7 6.♔xg7 ♔h5; 4…♘e5+ 5.♔g8 ♘g6 6.h5; 6.gxh8♕? ♗xh8 7.h5+ ♔f6 8.♔xh8 ♔f7; 7.gxh8♕? ♗e5; and 7.gxh8♘? e5 8.♘f7+ ♔xh5 9.♘d6 ♔g6.

Kalandadze

1.c7+ ♔c8 2.♘xc3 (1 point) **♗d4+ 3.♔f7 ♗xc3 4.♗d6** (+1 point = 2) **♗a5 5.♗c4 ♗xc7 6.♗a6+** (+1 = 3) **♔b8 7.♔e7 ♗xd6+ 8.♔xd6** (+1 = 4) **♔a8 9.♔c7** and **10.♗b7** (+1 = 5) mate.

Rewitz

1.♖a7+ ♔b6 2.g7 (1 point) **♗sg7 3.c7 d1♕ 4.c8♘+** (+1 point = 2) **♔c6 5.♘e7+ ♔d6 6.♘f5+** (+1 = 3) **♔e6 7.♘xg7+ ♔f6 8.♘h5+** (+1 = 4) **♔g6 9.♖g7+ ♔h6 10.f5** (+1 = 5) draws, because of:

10…♕d8 11.♖g6+ ♔h7 12.♖e6, and 10…♕d6 11.♖g6+ ♕xg6 12.fxg6 e2 13.g5+ ♔xg6 14.♘f4+.

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